

Democracy reaching nomads, tribesmen of Algerian plains

By Philip Shehadi
Reuter

AL BAYADH, Algeria — The ripples of democratic change have reached Algeria's grassy heartland, where nomadic shepherds and turbaned tribesmen are getting their first taste of multi-party politics.

As in Algiers, where President Chadli Benjedid launched a multi-party democracy last year, Islamic fundamentalists, Social Democrats and independents are vying in local and provincial elections to unseat the National Liberation Front (FLN) after 27 years of one-party rule.

"The stone was thrown in the water in Algiers, and the ripples are reaching us," said Bachir Bekkara of the town council. "There is a big debate going on."

But in this provincial capital 400 kilometres from the Mediterranean Sea, where Thursday's sheep market is still the economic heartbeat, tribe and family ties often run deeper than politics.

The FLN exerts a strong pull on a highly conservative population that reveres it for leading freedom fighters to in-

dependence from France in 1962.

"But tribal issues are very much alive and they are bound to erupt around election time," said a local FLN official.

Grassy plains, dotted with grazing horses, sheep and goats, surround Al Bayadh at the edge of the Algerian steppe 1,000 metres above sea level.

On the horizon, the rugged Saharan Atlas Mountains mark the northern boundary of the Sahara Desert and even greater sandy emptiness beyond.

Herdsman suffer freezing cold in winter and sizzling heat in summer.

Turbaned men walk the dusty streets wrapped in wool burnous, or hooded cloaks. Women stare from behind white veils.

The French founded Al Bayadh in 1852 as a fort to combat resistance to their advancing armies. It remains a garrison town, with municipal gardens, neo-classical squares and tree-lined boulevards recalling colonial days.

Drought — tragically relieved this month by torrential rains that killed 16 people — has decimated livestock and pushed the economy into a stamp with high unemploy-

ment.

Men greet each other in traditional bedouin fashion by bending down to kiss each other's shoulder. In a city of 49,000, social ties bind even political adversaries.

Rival candidates for June 12 municipal and provincial elections, the first multi-party poll in 30 years, kiss warmly on the steps of the office of the Wali (provincial governor) — fundamentalists sporting beards, FLN activists moustaches.

"People here don't always understand the new climate. They don't always play by the rules," he said.

The local FLN, led by young men of the party's reformist wing, thinks it can capitalise on patriotic feeling and traditional loyalty.

"There is optimism that the FLN or independents will be assured of victory," said an FLN official. He said 90 per cent of the independents were former FLN activists unable to get on lists.

A local FLN office headed by 37-year-old Abdul Qader Bouzad, preacher at Al Nur Mosque, opened last month. It has made inroads among disaffected youth as elsewhere in Algeria and professes equal optimism.

"We are the up and coming party. The FLN is the party on

organise an anti-fundamentalist rally at the same time that FIS activists from Al Bayadh had permission to conduct a public lecture.

A senior official said political rivalry was only the spark that ignited longstanding tension between the dominant Ouled Mou'min clan and tribal minorities in Al Ghassoul.

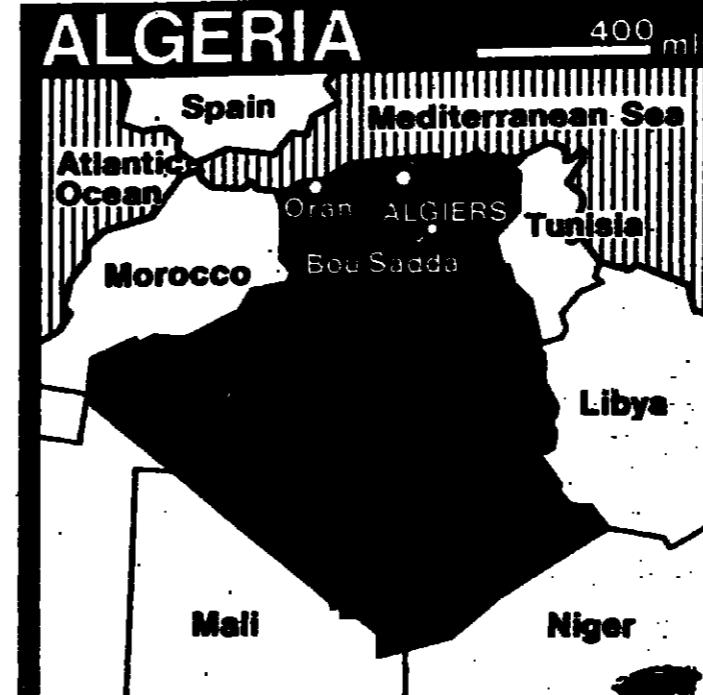
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the decline," the FLN official said.

But the fundamentalists have a formidable handicap in opposing the widespread adoration of Marabouts, local holy men to whom residents

sometimes attribute saintly powers. FIS positions have ruined traditional religious sentiment, opponents say.

"People don't like to be told how to pray," the FLN official said.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS BRIEFS

Egypt, Finland discuss Jewish immigration

CAIRO (R) — Egypt stressed its opposition to Soviet Jewish immigration to Israeli-occupied areas in talks Saturday with visiting Finnish Foreign Minister Pertti Paasio. Finland this month agreed to act as a transit point for Soviet Jewish migrants but President Mauno Koivisto said the decision would be reconsidered if they settled in the occupied Arab territories. "The Finnish government is aware... that we are strongly against immigration to occupied Arab territories because it would be at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people," Foreign Minister Esmaa Abdul Magad told reporters after meeting Paasio. The Finnish minister, on a four-day visit, made no reference to immigration in remarks to reporters. "We are disturbed about the situation in the Middle East. Finland is ready to make every effort to support the peace process, and especially stresses the importance of a dialogue between Palestinians, Israelis and all parties to the dispute," he said. On Tuesday, President Hosni Mubarak said the flood of Soviet Jews could push the Middle East to the brink of war.

Arafat says Swiss hostages alive

GENEVA (R) — PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has told the Swiss government that two Red Cross hostages in Lebanon are still alive and he will do all he can to get them freed, the Foreign Ministry said Saturday. Arafat met a foreign ministry official Friday evening, during a special U.N. Security Council session in Geneva, and told him that he was willing to do all he could to speed the release of Elias Enriquez and Emmanuel Christen, both Swiss. A ministry spokesman in Bern told Reuters that Arafat did not provide details of who was holding the two orthopaedic workers or what the demands were. The men, on the staff of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross, were seized on Oct. 6 in the port city of Sidon. Palestinian sources have linked the abduction to the imprisonment in Switzerland of Lebanese Shiite Muslim hijacker Hussein Mohammad Harran.

Palestinians fast in protest against Israel

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Fifty Palestinians were fasting Saturday at the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) office here in solidarity with Arabs on a hunger strike in the Israeli-occupied territories. Acting PLO representative Ibrahim Tamini said 30,000 Palestinian inmates in Israeli jails have been on a hunger strike for the past week to protest renewed violence in the territories. Israeli troops and Jewish settlers have killed 16 Palestinians and wounded more than 800 others since May 20 in clashes which came after seven unarmed Palestinian workers were killed by an Israeli. The staff of the PLO office and their families, along with 20 Palestinian university students, gathered at the office in an affluent residential area of Ankara. The PLO opened an office with diplomatic status here in 1979. Turkey is the only NATO country which has recognised an independent Palestinian state. Turkey is also the only country besides Egypt in the Islamic Bloc to have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Oman investigates oil slick

MUSCAT, Oman (AP) — An oil tanker was halted and its captain put under ship arrest Saturday as police and pollution control officials investigated the cause of a 6-kilometre slick off Oman, shipping executives reported. The 800-metre slick was spotted in the Gulf of Oman off the coast at Mina Al Fahal, 17 kilometres northwest of the capital, Muscat. The vessel was identified as the Gibraltar-registered Husaco Vally, said the shipping industry sources, who spoke on condition they were not named. Officials did not identify the tanker captain or give his nationality. But the sources said police had confiscated the vessel's registration certificate. A civilian aircraft first spotted the spill. Police coast guard units joined pollution control officers to contain the slick and question crewmen.

Somali president in Yemen

SANA (R) — Somali President Siad Barre arrived in the new Yemeni republic on the first visit by a foreign leader since the country's creation Tuesday. Samaa Radio said Siad Barre congratulated President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the unification of North and South Yemen after his arrival Friday night. The merger "will... strengthen security and stability in the region," said Barre, whose country lies across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen. The leaders discussed bilateral ties and regional developments, the radio said.

Tunisia convicts child killer

TUNIS (AP) — A court has convicted a man of molesting and killing 12 children in four years and sentenced him to death by hanging, judicial officials have said. The man, identified as Naceur Ben Alala Damergi, 45, was arrested in December following the unprecedented series of child killings in this North African nation. The nine boys and three girls were between 9 and 13 years old. During the trial, which ended Thursday evening, Damergi's lawyers, citing the "object" nature of the crimes, asked that their client undergo psychological tests. Damergi was arrested after a long search and admitted the crimes. He reconstructed them with "precision," showing investigators where the victims' bodies were hidden — mainly in pastures and unused wells, according to testimony. Called to testify, shaken parents of the victims were unable to contain themselves, with many of them demanding the murderer be hanged in a public square. No death sentence has been carried out in Tunisia for two years.

S. Arabia gives \$30m to intifada

NICOSIA (R) — Saudi Arabia gave the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) \$30.1 million Saturday to support the 29-month-old uprising in the occupied territories. The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said the cheque was handed to the Palestinian charge d'affaires in Riyadh, Mohammad Farajallah Isa, covering the kingdom's dues for the first five months of 1990. Under the final resolution of the Algiers Arab summit in 1988, Saudi Arabia pays \$6 million a month to help finance the uprising.

Lawyer says Israeli inmate tried to kill Hamadi in Frankfurt jail

FRANKFURT (AP) — An attorney for convicted TWA hijacker Mohammed Ali Hamadi said Friday that another inmate recently tried to kill his client in prison.

Lawyer Hans-Burkhardt Steck also said his office has filed charges against the inmate, whom he identified as "an Israeli named Mashia."

"He tried to stab Hamadi in the neck with a knife. It was just luck that Hamadi reacted quickly and suffered only a cut on his arm," the Frankfurt-based lawyer said.

Hamadi, a Lebanese Shi'ite Muslim, is serving a life sentence for the murder of a U.S. sailor during the 1985 TWA hijacking.

The lawyer said Mashia's first name was Youssef, that he had recently been jailed on a conviction for illegal drug deals and had been kept in the same prison area as Hamadi.

"He (Mashia) is an Israeli citizen, and had bothered Hamadi before, but prison officials didn't do anything to put him in a separate area," Steck said.

Hamadi is believed to be a member of Hizbollah, or Party of

God, in Beirut, a radical group Western officials say is responsible for numerous kidnappings in Lebanon. The group is reportedly holding U.S. hostages and Israeli prisoners.

Asked if he believed the attack on Hamadi may have been directed from outside the prison, Steck said: "I don't want to make such an assumption."

Steck said the incident occurred on May 5 as the inmates at Frankfurt's Preungesheim prison were left out of their cells for a "free period" within the jail confines.

Although Hamadi did not require stitches, a 15-centimetre long cut on his arm had to be bandaged, Steck said.

"We have filed attempted murder charges against the attacker," Steck said.

Steck told the Associated Press that Frankfurt justice officials described the incident as a normal alteration that sometimes occurs among prison inmates.

A spokesman for Frankfurt prosecutor's office, Jochen Schröers, said he could not pro-

Cyprus denies island is transit for Soviet Jews

NICOSIA (AP) — The government issued statistics Saturday which it said proved that the East Mediterranean island is not being used as a transit point for large-scale Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel.

Government spokesman Akis Fantis, seeking to rebut Arab allegations that Cyprus is a staging post for Soviet Jews, said that in the first four months of this year 1,770 Soviet citizens flew from Moscow to Cyprus to catch flights to Israel.

Fantis said the figures prove that Cyprus is used mainly as a stopover for the growing tourist traffic to Israel as a result of the relaxation of Soviet regulations governing travel to Israel.

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The survey was carried out after Arab ambassadors in Nicosia, the capital, protested the movement of Soviet citizens to Israel through the island.

The Arabs fear that hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews will emigrate to Israel in the next few years following Moscow's relaxation of travel restrictions.

The Arabs' main concern is that many of the Soviet Jews will be settled in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, roughly the area proclaimed an independent Palestinian state in 1988.

The Israeli cabinet approved an emergency plan on May 14 to spend \$1.2 billion to absorb 150,000 Soviet Jews expected to arrive in fiscal 1990.

Israeli officials have said that as many as 750,000 Soviet Jews may eventually immigrate to Israel in the next few years.

Fantis said that the percentage of Soviet Jews travelling to and from Israel through Cyprus is "very small" compared to the tens of thousands of Soviet Jews who go to Israel

Arab leaders start arriving in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Arab leaders started arriving here on Saturday for an extraordinary Arab summit slated to open May 28.

The first to arrive were Sudanese military leader Omar Ahmad Hassan El Bashir and the Presidents of Mauritania, Somalia and Djibouti: Maawiya Ould Sidi Ahmad Al Tayeb, Mohammad Siad Barre and Hassan Gouled.

The leaders were received at the airport by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his top aides in the government and the ruling Baath Party.

Officials said most Arab heads of state are expected Sunday, a day before the opening of the summit called to discuss emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel and other threats to Arab security.

Eighteen Arab countries and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are taking part in the summit which is boycotted by Syria and Lebanon.

North and South Yemen, after their official merger May 26, are attending as one delegation.

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, on his way to the sum-

PFLP claims attack on Israeli surrogates

RASHAYA (AP) — Palestinian guerrillas ambushed a convoy of Israeli-backed militiamen in South Lebanon Saturday inflicting an undisclosed number of casualties and losing four of their men, Lebanese security sources reported.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) said in a series of communiques issued in Beirut that its fighters carried out the attack to avenge the massacre of eight Palestinian workers by an Israeli gunman near Tel Aviv last Sunday.

The Lebanese sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a guerrilla force detonated three remote-control bombs on a road inside Israel's self-designated "security zone" north of the border with the Jewish state as the South Lebanon Army

(SLA) convoy passed.

But an Israeli army spokesman in Tel Aviv said there were no SLA casualties, but reported that the militiamen killed four guerrillas. He made no mention of bombs.

The Israeli version indicated that a patrol of the SLA intercepted an infiltration attempt rather than the militiamen were ambushed.

The PFLP said in one communiqué: "The heroic operation was our response to the massacre committed by the Zionists against the workers of Palestine."

The group acknowledged that it lost four "martyrs" in the daring operation.

It said the raiders "detonated remote-controlled bombs beside an enemy convoy, inflicting a number of casualties."

Baghdad makes comeback as major summit venue after war years

BAGHDAD (R) — Baghdad, billing itself as "the city of victory and peace", is basking in its return to diplomatic centre stage after eight years of the Gulf war.

Arab kings and presidents began an emergency meeting Monday in the Iraqi capital, shunned as a venue for major summits since 1980 because of the Iran-Iraq conflict.

They will meet in a lavish conference centre built at great expense for a Non-Aligned summit which should have taken place there in 1982.

The meeting moved to India because Iran and Syria, Tehran's Arab ally, objected to the venue. Many other countries felt that Baghdad, 120 kilometres from the Iranian border, was not safe for so many heads of state in wartime.

During the war the city, stretches for 70 kilometres along both banks of the Tigris, suffered

frequent Iranian rocket attacks.

Fighting ended with a U.N.-sponsored ceasefire in August 1988. Iraq hailed it as a victory, although peace talks remain deadlocked.

But Baghdad, once capital of an Arab empire stretching from Algeria to the steppes of Central Asia, has settled back to more peaceful ways.

The latest addition is a victory arch formed by crossed swords.

The first which hold the hilts are modelled on those of President Saddam Hussein, 40 times life-size. Even the fingerprints are carefully copied.

Billboard portraits of Hussein are standard at most large junctions. They show him in a variety of costume, from military fatigues and business suits to beards and panama hats. More posters have gone up to mark the summit.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Tel. 703111-19
15:15 ... Tel. 615740
15:45 ... Programme review
17:10 ... News summary in Arabic
18:00 ... Local programme
18:20 ... Cultural programme
18:40 ... Local programme
18:45 ... Programme review
20:00 ... News in Arabic
20:30 ... News summary in Arabic

Home News

Premier expects stronger economy

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian economy is expected to regain its vigour and strength within the coming two years thanks to the implementation of a national programme designed to boost the Kingdom's exports and reduce imports, Prime Minister Mu'ad Badran said here Saturday.

"The programme is part of a set of government economic and financial measures designed to stimulate the national economy," the prime minister said in a statement during his meeting with a United Nations fact finding mission which is now on a tour of the Arab region.

Jordan is in the process of building up its foreign currency reserves which are being increased continuously in a manner that would ensure the success of the economic restructuring programme," Badran was quoted as saying by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

According to the Central Bank Governor Mohammad Saeed Al Nabhan, earlier this month, the Kingdom's present foreign currency reserves now stand at \$490 million, including an amount of

\$20 million received on May 9 from the United Arab Emirates.

Nabhan projects the country's confidence of increasing the reserves by \$150 million by the end of 1990.

In referring to the causes behind Jordan's economic crisis, the prime minister blamed the failure of Arab countries to honour their financial commitments to Jordan and the world economic recession which caused a decline in oil prices.

"Towards the end of 1989 Jordan reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a comprehensive economic restructuring programme and the Kingdom reached a deal with foreign creditors on reducing Jordan's debts," the prime minister added. He said that these two steps were bound to help the country regain its economic stability.

Badran described as excellent the Kingdom's relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation is characterised by mutual confidence, clarity and joint action to serve the Jordanian and Palestinian people.

Radio Jordan started short wave Arabic broadcasting to the world

AMMAN (J.T.) — Radio Jordan Arabic services has started transmitting Arabic programmes on short waves to the five continents

morning (local time).

Starting with 11 a.m. the transmission is broadcast to Australia and the Far East, from 12 noon to Argentina, Chile, Brazil, from one in the afternoon to the United States and Canada, from 11:30 p.m. to the Gulf region, Australia and the Far East, and from 9:30 after midnight to North Africa and Central America.

Each transmission lasts one hour, Rahaifa said.

Muwaqqar Al Rahaf, director of the department in charge of short wave services told the Jordan Times that altogether five hours of short wave programmes were broadcast to Australia, Latin America, U.S., Canada, the Gulf region, the Far East, North Africa, Central America and Western Europe.

He said that achievements in Jordan, cultural programmes and teaching of Arabic to foreigners were transmitted daily between 11 a.m. and half past one in the

morning (local time).

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He said that prominent events in Jordan and the Arab World and general outlines in local papers and magazines are included in the programmes.

Radio Jordan English services has been transmitting to the five continents on short waves from 1 p.m. to 7:30 daily since the middle of 1989 when the new transmitting station at Kharaneh was formally opened.

Labour market reviewed in meeting with ILO official

AMMAN (J.T.) — An official from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and several ministries and Jordanian organisations had a meeting at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) Saturday where they conducted a final review of working papers dealing with the labour market in Jordan, unemployment and other related matters.

Director of the RSS Economic Research Centre Dr. Ahmad El Qasim told the Jordan Times that the meeting reviewed eight working papers and gave the go ahead for their publication in a book that would be out for distribution in two months' time at the latest.

The ILO coordinator in labour and population matters for Middle East Mediterranean countries, along with delegates from the ministries of planning and

labour, Jordanian universities and the RSS had a day-long review of the working papers which focused attention on the demographic, economic and social life in Jordan and the Arab World, fields of employment and future prospects in the Arab region.

"Matters related to vocational training, prospects for the labour market and social and economic prospects for employment abroad are also included in the papers," Qasim said.

He said that the papers can be useful to policy makers and planners. Qasim noted that the meeting was the first by the ILO with the RSS and he announced that the two sides decided that further meetings would be held in the future to discuss matters related to labour.

According to an official from the Ministry of Agriculture, Jordan exported 50,000 tonnes of agricultural products to Lebanon in the last nine months.

The marketing of Jordanian products abroad is done through the Jordan Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company (JAMPCO) whose director general was present.

The centre, located in the Al Raqim area in Sahab district,

provides sales and services which include training for trainees from vocational centres in Jordan.

According to a company spokesman, the centre is also planning to help the trained students to acquire employment in Jordan and abroad after completing their courses here. He said the centre would provide maintenance services to thousands of small cars and lorries in Jordan or those passing in transit to various Arab countries.

Gargour said that the centre cost around JD 3,300,000.

Another speaker was F.A. Wolf, director of the company's passenger car division, who outlined Jordan's cooperation with Mercedes-Benz in Germany.

Earlier in the day, the company's director of research and development Ingo Kalina and Azar Bawab, Gargour managing director, spoke about safety in Mercedes-Benz cars.

Chinese embassy here, will be part of the Kingdom's celebration marking the country's 44th independence anniversary, according to an official announcement.

Other events include a seminar on Jordanian-Chinese relations and a joint variety show, featuring Jordanian and Chinese folk performances.

The Queen will open a plastic art exhibition at the start of the week-long programme which will display paintings and other Jordanian and Chinese works of art.

According to Nadim Gargour, the centre was constructed on a 24,000 square metre plot of land and contains the following sections: administration, sales and exhibitions area of 2,800 square metres, spare parts area, service section of 4,800 square metres that can accommodate 60 cars and 16 medium to heavy commercial vehicles at any one time, body and paint section, fully equipped restaurant with an area

of 500 square metres and a training centre's area of 120 square metres.

Gargour, who was speaking at the opening ceremony, said that the centre would play an important role through special programmes which would be implemented in cooperation with the Mercedes-Benz company, especially in training Jordanians with the help of sophisticated instruments in management systems and stock control which are fully computerised.

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According to Nadim Gargour, the centre was constructed on a 24,000 square metre plot of land and contains the following sections: administration, sales and exhibitions area of 2,800 square metres, spare parts area, service section of 4,800 square metres that can accommodate 60 cars and 16 medium to heavy commercial vehicles at any one time, body and paint section, fully equipped restaurant with an area

of 500 square metres and a training centre's area of 120 square metres.

Gargour, who was speaking at the opening ceremony, said that the centre would play an important role through special programmes which would be implemented in cooperation with the Mercedes-Benz company, especially in training Jordanians with the help of sophisticated instruments in management systems and stock control which are fully computerised.

Gargour said that the centre cost around JD 3,300,000.

Another speaker was F.A. Wolf, director of the company's passenger car division, who outlined Jordan's cooperation with Mercedes-Benz in Germany.

Earlier in the day, the company's director of research and development Ingo Kalina and Azar Bawab, Gargour managing director, spoke about safety in Mercedes-Benz cars.

Chinese embassy here

Jordan Times

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Support begins at home

THE IDEAS introduced by the PLO before the U.N. Security Council Friday which aim to have a stronger U.N. presence in the occupied Arab territories are worthy of serious consideration and support. The international community, especially the Arab World, was temporarily encouraged by the initial U.S. reaction to similar proposals when U.S. Secretary of State James Baker expressed the view that any initiative put before the U.N. Security Council calling for placing U.N. observers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would receive Washington's serious consideration. Unfortunately, since striking that positive note, the U.S. was subjected as usual to Israeli intimidation and as usual it knocked by starting to waver on that proposal. Nevertheless, the idea of increasing the U.N. presence in the occupied territories could still be a breakthrough if adopted by the U.N. Security Council. In many ways such a plan could very well usher in the true commencement of the settlement of the Palestinian situation. By at least placing U.N. observers in the occupied territories, the stage would be set to place the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip under the trusteeship of the United Nations in preparation for statehood and independence for the Palestinian people. Of course, Israel knows only too well the implications of such a move. That is why Tel Aviv hastened to oppose Baker's announcement of U.S. support of the idea to have a U.N. presence in the occupied territories to monitor the situation there. And all of a sudden Israel started remembering international law especially the Geneva Convention and started to invoke its "rights" under that convention as an occupying power. Whatever happened to Tel Aviv's official stance that that convention is not applicable to the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

Nevertheless, there are no pertinent provisions in international law relevant to the occupation of territories by an aggressor, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, that prevents a greater U.N. involvement in monitoring the alarming situation in an occupied territory. Secondly, it so happens that the United Nations system adopts legal principles and resolutions that have the effect and force of customary international law. Above all, the Security Council, the very U.N. organ that can take enforceable and binding resolutions, has the power as expressed in the United Nations Charter to adopt resolutions and take measures of the kind envisaged now, namely to place U.N. observers in the occupied territories.

It so happens that the PLO is calling for that kind of U.N. action in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. There are growing signs that other members of the U.N. Security Council, including its permanent members, are at least open minded to the principle of enhancing the U.N. presence in the occupied territories in view of the continuing deterioration of the situation there. Should such ideas come to fruition the stage would be set for a meaningful start of the settlement of the elusive Palestinian conflict. It would be timely, therefore, if the Arab summit would declare its support for such an idea and adopt it as an integral part of the Arab stand.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i daily on Saturday expressed the view that the Arab summit in Baghdad opening Monday is bound to have additional burdens resulting from Washington's refusal to refrain Israel from committing further crimes in Palestine. The paper said Washington which announced its readiness to send U.N. observer teams to occupied Palestine only to retract its statement in this regard, is trying to complicate matters for the Arab leaders in Baghdad and to confuse the Arab masses. Should Washington continue to lend support for the Israeli criminal actions, then it is bound to be facing a new development in the region and the prospect of having the Palestinians resort to new methods to defend themselves from barbaric attacks, the paper noted. It said that by refraining to send observer teams to Palestine, and by backing Israel's position at the United Nations Security Council, the United States is advocating Israel's terrorism and opening the door wide for counter terrorist acts in the Middle East. The Security Council which heard Yasser Arafat's speech and Jordan's address, is dealing with the question of war of genocide being launched by Israel on the Arabs. Should Washington succeed in thwarting the council's attempts to provide protection to the Palestinians, then the paper added it would have on purpose thwarted moves towards peace and a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict by allowing this chance to be missed.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily launches a bitter attack on the United States, describing its policies in the Middle East as a big lie. Tareq Masarweh says in his column that Washington is doing silly things and acting foolishly by trying to dissuade Arab leaders from taking a collective action vis-a-vis Israel's atrocities and United States hostile position. The writer says that the United States has no credibility in the Arab World, and no one can ever believe a world of what Washington's statesmen say. The writer notes that Washington was trying to play for time by first announcing its approval to send U.N. observer teams to Palestine only to retract its words, and also by sending false assurances to the Arab leaders that Israel would never start a war. The Arabs have mustered sufficient experience in dealing with the United States and its false statements since 1967 when Israel considered Egypt's demand to have control of Sharm Al Sheikh as tantamount to a declaration of war, hence its June aggression on the Arabs, the writer notes. He says Israel considers Iraq's possession of missiles as a declaration of war and is planning for a new aggression which the Arabs can never rule out.

The current debate at the U.N. Security Council in Geneva offers a good chance for the world community to better understand the situation in the Middle East and offers the Arabs a chance to expose Israel's atrocities against the Palestinian people, said Al Dastoor in its editorial Saturday. The paper said that the world community now watches Israel staging a war of genocide against the defenceless Palestinian women and children as PLO leader Yasser Arafat said in his address to the council Friday. The current criminal actions committed by the Zionists should prompt the council and the world community to heed Arafat's call for sending U.N. observer teams to monitor the situation and to pave the way for a solution to the Palestine problem, the paper said. The Palestinian people, the paper added have the right to protection from the world community in the face of continued crimes and atrocities, and they also deserve solidarity from all peace-loving nations.

Sunday Economic Pulse

Unrest causes heavy economic losses

By Dr. Fahed Faneck

THREE days of unrest in Jordan almost overshadowed the Israeli massacre of seven Palestinian labourers and left political, security and economic scars that need some time to evaluate. Today I shall try to look into, and where possible quantify, the damages that resulted from the unrest in four major economic sectors.

For 20 years, since 1970 Jordan was an island of stability and internal security in the troubled Middle East. At all times, foreigners residing in Jordan or those arriving for tourism or business felt safe and at ease, not only because of security and stability, but also because of the friendly and hospitable attitude Jordanians.

The assault on the French tourists in Amman and the violence that accompanied some of the popular marches and demonstrations which followed the Israeli killing of the

Arab labourers did not only echo in the world at large, but it shocked the average Jordanian, who condemns violence and disorder instigated by an irresponsible minority especially when it diverted world intention away from Israeli atrocities committed in the occupied territories, and threatened the national security of the country.

Peaceful and civilised expression of opinion and national sentiments, including marches and demonstrations, could have been a positive indicator of democracy, which allowed the people to express anger on behalf of the whole Arab Nation against the Palestinian holocaust at the hands of the new fascists of Israel, and in support of the intifada.

Unfortunately, the drift to violence and destruction of property, limited as it may have been, drew the attention

of the news agencies and overshadowed the killing of 15 Palestinians by Israelis in one day.

Security forces showed self-restraint and firmness, and left no doubt that the security of the country can be protected. Although the unrest was mainly political, yet the worst consequences will be economical.

At least four sectors are going to be affected because of the incidents. These are tourism, expatriate remittances, new investment, and capital flight.

In tourism, Jordan's income from the sector in 1989 amounted to JD 350 million (\$350 million). The estimated loss resulting from the cancellation of group tours and the scaring off of potential tourists could not be less than \$50 million. It is unfortunate that this blow took place at a time when incoming tourism was gaining momentum. Until last

week the forecast growth of tourist arrivals in 1990 was 15 per cent. Now, it will fall down considerably.

Remittances from Jordanian expatriates in 1989 reached JD 380 million (\$370 million). It was expected to reach \$300 million in 1990 according to projections by the Central Bank and the IMF mission.

The incidents may cause some expatriates to keep their savings abroad, and thus Jordan may end up with another loss of \$50 million or so.

As far as new investments are concerned, the private sector has been hesitating to make new investments. Potential investors opted to wait and see if Jordan's economic adjustment programme is going to work and whether or not the government is going to adhere to it. Now that the programme started to show better results than was expected, and the commitment of the govern-

ment to the programme was established, it was hoped that new investment will start to pick up. Now it is feared that the hesitant investors will have second thoughts and new factors to take into consideration.

Finally the unrest must have a negative effect on capital flight. It was noticed that capital flight from Jordan was halted as of mid 1989. On the contrary, some private capital was repatriated after the relative stability of the exchange rate since August. It is only reasonable to expect some capital flight in one hand and a slow down in the return of Jordanian private capital abroad on the other.

These were the bad news. The good news is that some analysts see in what happened a test which Jordan passed with flying colours. The system proved to be effective, maintaining law and order firmly, uses



NATO: A bit more comfortable this year?

By Charles Aldinger
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Perhaps U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney best typified NATO's relief this week as the Western alliance began to reduce its expensive military guard against Moscow for the first time in 40 years.

"A year ago, I had to go sell three per cent," he said, recalling Washington's repeated, unpopular calls for member states to raise military spending by three per cent a

year.

"I'm much more comfortable this year," Cheney added with a grin on May 22 while en route to Brussels, knowing that on May 23 defence ministers would scrap that grating budget demand in response to the fall of the Warsaw Pact.

By May 24 night, the ministers' defence planning committee had also flushed expensive and unpopular war games and announced that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation would begin slightly reducing its battle readiness on July 1.

"He isn't the only one who is more comfortable these days," a senior NATO official said on hearing the Cheney remark. "And to think it was Gorbachev who came over the hill and put us out for our financial misery."

NATO defence ministers ended a two-day meeting in Brussels on May 24, with a pledge to look again at strategies formed in the 1960s, when the Warsaw Pact was seen as a major threat to the West and its values. The review is to be finished by the end of the year. A conference of NATO leaders in London in July is expected to agree on more guidelines.

With the Soviet military spurned in Eastern Europe and getting fewer rumbles at home, private defence analysts praised the NATO move to relax its military posture for the first time since it was formed in 1949.

"It's a judgment call. But I would be prepared to argue that we have now moved, as a result of the developments last year, from a situation in which we were talking about a matter of days to a situation in which we are talking about a matter of at least a few months," he said.

Assistant Defence Secretary Lawrence Korb of the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank.

Analyst Jim Blackwell of the centre for Strategic and International Studies think tank said NATO's move towards multi-national units was a good idea.

"They don't cost any less, but they signal togetherness with a lot of different flags in allied countries," he said.

Though some relaxation will take place, alliance officials say many key elements of strategy will be retained because of the threat of instability in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Cheney and other senior U.S. defence officials appeared happy but low-key as they arrived home late on May 24.

Cheney and Assistant Defence Secretary Stephen Hadley cautioned that the easing in military readiness would come in three phases and that its outcome would rest in large measure on Vienna negotiations on balancing conventional forces in Europe (CFE).

In July, Hadley said, a helicopter unit, for example, might be allowed to increase from four to 48 hours the time it must be ready to fight. That is a far cry from changing the current requirement that the United States be prepared to move 10 divisions to Europe within the 10 days of the breakout of a war, said Cheney.

But Cheney, an acknowledged sceptic of Soviet intentions, also relented with perhaps the most optimistic public statement to come out of the Pentagon since the Berlin wall began to crumble last year.

He said NATO forces would now have more warning time for any Soviet attack on Western Europe.

"It's a judgment call. But I would be prepared to argue that we have now moved, as a result of the developments last year, from a situation in which we were talking about a matter of days to a situation in which we are talking about a matter of at least a few months," he said.

Disastrous week for Jewish state

By Paul Taylor
Reuter

TEL AVIV — It has been a disastrous week for Israel, one of the worst since the Palestinian uprising erupted in December 1987.

A beleaguered caretaker government faces a growing danger of the conflict with Palestinians in the occupied territories being internationalised — and spreading to Israel's own Arab minority.

Sympathy protests in Jordan, uninvited foreign fact-finding missions and a threat of U.N. intervention have alienated Israeli leaders.

A chain of events mostly beyond the government's control has left the Jewish state as isolated as at any time since its 1967 invasion of Lebanon.

On May 20, a "deranged" Israeli shot dead seven Palestinians, re-igniting widespread riots in which troops and Jewish settlers shot dead 16 Arabs and wounded nearly 900 in six days.

On May 21, violence spread to Israeli Arabs while the Arab World raged at Israel.

On May 22, the clashes reached the doorstep of the U.S. consulate in East Jerusalem. Washington called on Israel to restrain its troops and implicitly blamed the Jewish

state for the lack of progress towards Middle East peace.

On May 23, the United States said it would support sending a U.N. observer mission to the occupied territories. Israel flatly refused.

On May 24, the war of words with Washington intensified. Uninvited French and Soviet delegations arrived to study the situation in the occupied territories.

On May 25, Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat, seen by Israelis as their arch-enemy, was addressing a special session of the U.N. Security Council in Geneva with the Jewish state standing virtually alone.

Israel officials see each international condemnation as another achievement for the PLO and the leadership of the uprising.

Policy-makers fear the Security Council session and next week's Arab summit in Baghdad will give the uprising and the PLO a further boost.

"Each small victory gives them more motivation and staying power to continue the intifada (uprising)," said a senior analyst, who may not be identified. "This week the other side scored a lot of points."

The Israelis say the most worrying aspects are the

spread of protests against Israel to Jordan, and the increasing entanglement of Israel's 650,000 Arab citizens.

"Everything that happens in Jordan is played back here and reinforces the Arabs in the West Bank," the analyst said.

Television pictures of riot police dispersing marchers who tried to march on the bridge to the West Bank earlier this month helped trigger the latest wave of unrest in the occupied territories.

"Likewise everything that happens inside the green line (of Israel's pre-1967 borders) is seen in the territories and affects what happens there," the analyst said.

Israel's most respected military commentator, Zeev Schiff, wrote in the newspaper Haaretz: "The continuation of the occupation and the bloody confrontation in the territories will in the end bring the violent struggle inside the borders of Israel. It will be a confrontation between the state of Israel

and its Arab minority."

The sudden re-ignition of the smouldering uprising could hardly come at a worse time for Israel.

After weeks of a debilitating political crisis, it still has no new government and caretaker Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's efforts to form a right-wing cabinet could further alienate the Jewish state's friends.

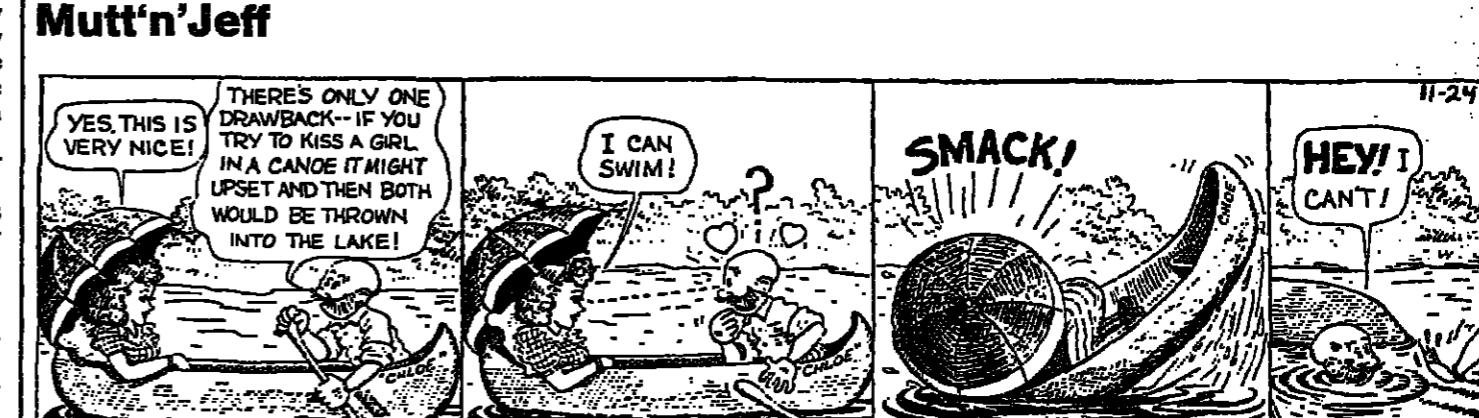
Relations with Washington have reached a low point following Shamir's refusal to accept U.S. proposals for peace talks with the Palestinians, and his approval of new Jewish settlements on occupied Arab land.

Bewildered leaders refuse to accept that their own policies have contributed to Israel's isolation and blame anti-Semitism or double standards for the international furor.

The mood in Israel's corridors of power is gloomy and defiant, not conciliatory.



Mutt'n Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



LA SEMAINE DE...

Suleiman Sweiss

Bagdad: défis au sommet

Peut-être le sommet à Bagdad constitue-t-il un tournant historique dans les années de l'action arabe commune. Trop d'espoirs, ou de sentiments amers, se sont joués dans l'attente de cet événement, panarabe extraordinaire. Le massacre de 7 ouvriers palestiniens commis par un forcené israélien dimanche dernier ainsi que la répression, avenge de l'armée d'occupation, sont autant de défis qui viennent d'ajouter à ceux, déjà nombreux, du sommet. Pour de nombreux Arabes, l'heure a sonné des mesures décisives. Ils exigent que soient relevés les défis accumulés pendant de longues années d'impuissance et de politiques erronées. A défaut, la région risque le déclin, la débandade ou le suicide collectif tout court.

Il y a d'abord le défi israélien. Malgré toutes les concessions faites par les régimes arabes et l'OLP, la paix n'a jamais semblé aussi loin. La politique autoritaire des dirigeants israéliens et celle des Américains sont les premières responsables de la situation. La sécurité nationale arabe s'en trouve gravement menacée depuis des années. Certains observateurs vont jusqu'à estimer qu'Israël se prépare à déclencher une nouvelle guerre d'expansion, au service des nouveaux émigrants juifs soviétiques.

Le massacre de dimanche dernier montre que la coupe est pleine. Il suffit de considérer les réactions populaires en Jordanie. Les manifestations de colère se sont largement répandues dans le pays. Il faut le dire: la politique criminelle, arrogante et méprisante qui imprime les dirigeants israéliens laisse de moins en moins de choix aux Arabes, y compris aux plus modérés d'entre eux.

Autre défi, qui attend les participants au sommet de Bagdad: clarifier la place que les Arabes vont occuper dans un monde qui se défait et se refait. Après les bouleversements survenus dans les pays de l'Est, quelle peut être la politique du "régime arabe traditionnel" à l'égard des grandes puissances? Il apparaît plus évident aujourd'hui que les relations entre nations s'établissent sur la base d'intérêts reciproques, plutôt que sur celle des idéologies. La force des Etats est d'ailleurs avant tout d'ordre économique. C'est pourquoi il faut sans doute se décider à activer un processus d'union entre pays arabes. Sinon, ces derniers risquent d'être progressivement anéantis. L'unification des deux Yémen, cette semaine, est un signe encourageant de la lucidité de certains dirigeants arabes.

Troisième défi: le développement économique. La plupart des pays arabes sont confrontés à de graves crises, au chômage, à la dette extérieure et à la faiblesse de leur croissance économique. C'est notamment le cas de la Jordanie, de l'Egypte, du Soudan, de la Tunisie. Les régimes arabes ont perdu beaucoup de temps au cours des deux dernières décennies. En 1980, les dirigeants arabes s'étaient retrouvés à Amman et avaient décrété les années 1980 décennie du développement. Peu de progrès ont été réalisés depuis, malgré de nombreuses réunions, d'innombrables projets et des dépenses de milliards de dollars. Les dirigeants arabes sont appelés à dépasser leurs divergences et leurs intérêts régionaux pour pouvoir enfin créer la communauté économique arabe, tant attendue par la population des différents pays.

Quel est le rôle de la Jordanie dans tout cela? Rappelons-nous: l'idée du sommet des chefs d'Etat du monde arabe a pris corps il y a un mois à Tunis, après l'évocation par la Jordanie et l'OLP de l'urgence d'une réaction aux vagues d'émigrants juifs d'Union Soviétique. Pour relever ce défi, la Jordanie attend des autres pays arabes un soutien concret, principalement sur le plan économique. Les revendications populaires, elles, mettent l'accent sur la réactivation prioritaire du "Front oriental", constitué de la Jordanie, de la Syrie, de l'OLP, de l'Irak et du Liban. Une solidarité accrue avec l'Intifada et le peuple palestinien semble tout autant primordiale et indispensable. Étant les plus exposés aux dangers sionistes, la Jordanie et l'OLP ont grand intérêt au succès du sommet de Bagdad.

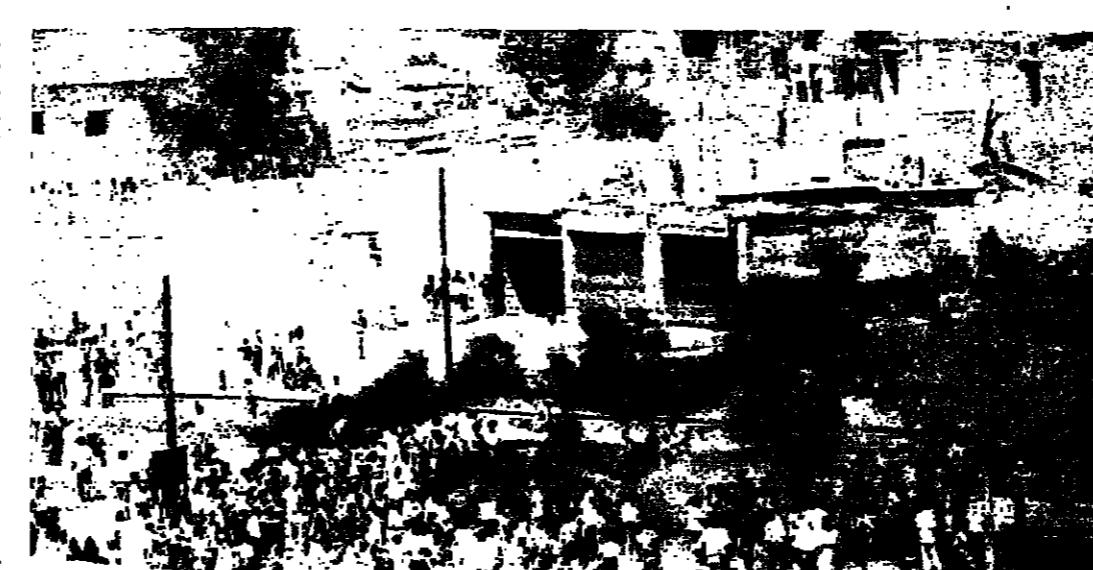
Un sommet, qui devra trouver une réponse à la question fondamentale de l'attitude du monde arabe dans son ensemble face aux défis qui surprennent en cette fin de XXe siècle.

3 morts et 29 blessés dans les manifestations en Jordanie

Trois jours de deuil enfiévré

Des centaines de milliers de réfugiés palestiniens ont observé cette semaine un deuil de trois jours, au lendemain du massacre de huit ouvriers de Gaza par un forcené israélien dimanche au sud de Tel Aviv. De nombreuses manifestations se sont

succédées de lundi à mercredi dans les camps de Jordanie ainsi qu'à Amman. Plusieurs d'entre elles ont dégénéré en affrontements avec les forces de l'ordre, faisant trois morts et 29 blessés.



Phares enflammés, routes jonchées de pierres: les manifestations de cette semaine ont parfois dégénéré.

Les funérailles vendredi de Mohammad Abbas Abou Ghadib, 22 ans, tué mardi dans le camp de Hittine au nord-est d'Amman, ont constitué le dernier événement d'une semaine d'agitation tout azimut en Jordanie. Près de 500 personnes, dont deux parlementaires jordaniens, ont suivi dans le calme le cercueil, enveloppé dans un drapeau palestinien, jusqu'au cimetière du camp de réfugiés. Le plus part portaient des calicots sur lesquels étaient inscrits «unité de la lutte jordano-palestinienne» ou «les sangs martyrs ne sera pas gaspillés».

Ces obsèques ont fait suite à l'enterrement discret, jeudi, d'un autre manifestant de Hittine, également âgé de 22 ans, tué la veille dans une autre manifestation. Trois personnes ont au total trouvé la mort et 29 autres ont été blessées, selon le dernier bilan officiel, dans les troubles qui ont secoué le royaume cette semaine.

Le colère des réfugiés palestiniens de Jordanie était prévisible. Le massacre aveugle de huit ouvriers de Gaza, dimanche dernier à Rishon le Zion, près de Tel Aviv, a particulièrement affecté ceux qui vivent à quelques dizaines de kilomètres seulement de la rive ouest du Jourdain. C'est d'ailleurs dans les camps que, dès lundi, plusieurs centaines de personnes, jeunes pour la plupart, ont envahi les rues étroites pour dénoncer la répression israélienne. Ainsi dans le camp de Baqaa, sur la route de Jérash, où une première manifestation s'est déroulée le matin dans le calme à l'appel des syndicats professionnels et de plusieurs organisations palestiniennes.

Acte isolé

Le même moment, cependant, un forcené ouvrant le feu avec un pistolet à grenaille sur des touristes français, qui descendaient de deux cars et s'apprêtaient à visiter l'amphithéâtre romain de la Ville Basse. Avant d'être maîtrisé par un policier, Ahmad Jassir Badouane, dont les autorités jordaniennes devaient révéler plus tard qu'il avait perdu un parent dans la tuerie de Rishon le Zion, a blessé neuf personnes, huit touristes français et un photographe jordanien. Plus de peur que de mal, cependant. Aucune des victimes n'a été grièvement touchée, comme devaient le constater l'ambassadeur de France, Denis Bauchard, puis le roi Hussein en personne, en se rendant à leur chevet à l'hôpital.

L'attentat a aussitôt été condamné, depuis Tunis, par Bassam Abou Sharif, conseiller du chef de l'OLP. Le souverain hachémite a affirmé pour sa part qu'il regrettait «profondément» un acte que M. Bauchard devait qualifier d'«isolé». Malgré les mises en garde du gouvernement contre tout débordement, plusieurs manifestations à Amman et dans les camps ont dégénéré dans la soirée en affrontements avec les forces de l'ordre et des unités anti-émeutes.

Plusieurs centaines de personnes

ont ainsi attaqué l'hôtel de la chaîne Marriot à Shmeisani, saccageant la porte et brisant la vitre d'entrée, avant de s'en prendre à une boutique de fleur au rez-de-chaussée du bâtiment. Ces incidents ont provoqué l'intervention musclée de la police, qui, à coups de matraques et de bombes lacrymogènes, a repoussé un plus tard dans la nuit quelque 15.000 manifestants qui tentaient de s'approcher de l'ambassade des Etats-Unis.

Mardi matin, les explosions de colère se sont multipliées. Alors que deux manifestations pacifiques se déroulaient devant l'université de Jordanie, où des boîtes d'alcoolisées (les brasseries Anstel et Henninger, ainsi que l'usine d'Arak al-Nisr) ont été saccagées. De nombreux observateurs ont mis en cause certains mouvements islamistes dans ces derniers incidents.

Le Conseil national palestinien a, de son côté, lancé des appels

aux maisons flottaient des drapeaux noirs, des groupes de jeunes, souvent inorganisés, s'en sont pris au poste de police à l'intérieur du camp, obligeant les forces de l'ordre à user de leurs armes. A quelques dizaines de kilomètres de là, des réfugiés de Wahdat se retrouvaient également aux prises avec les forces anti-émeutes. La journée devait se solder par deux morts, tués par les balles, dont un jeune de 16 ans, à Dibid.

Dans la soirée, de nouveaux actes de vandalisme ont été commis à Rousseifeh, où trois usines de boissons alcoolisées (les brasseries Anstel et Henninger, ainsi que l'usine d'Arak al-Nisr) ont été saccagées. De nombreux observateurs ont mis en cause certains mouvements islamistes dans ces derniers incidents.

Alain Renon avec agences.

Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU

Arafat plaide pour l'envoi d'une force d'interposition

Le président du Conseil exécutif de l'OLP, qui s'est exprimé vendredi, pour la première fois, devant le Conseil de sécurité des Nations-Unis à Genève, a demandé à l'ONU d'envoyer d'urgence une force d'interposition dans les territoires occupés, pour protéger les Palestiniens de la «guerre d'extermination» menée selon lui par Israël. Yasser Arafat a placé la barre très haut en sollicitant également des sanctions contre l'Etat hébreu et le rejet de toute nouvelle implantation de colons juifs en Cisjordanie ou à Gaza.

Le massacre de 8 ouvriers palestiniens dimanche dernier au sud de Tel Aviv, qui est à l'origine de la convocation du Conseil de sécurité, n'est pas dû à «la folie d'un individu» a ajouté le leader de l'OLP au cours d'une intervention de près d'une heure. «La responsabilité [en] incombe à la folie d'un système entier», a-t-il déclaré, en estimant que la situation actuelle «exige une action urgente».

Yasser Arafat a également demandé au secrétaire général de l'ONU, Javier Perez de Cuellar, de désigner un émissaire permanent chargé de promouvoir la paix dans la région, ou, à défaut, de se charger en personne du dossier. Il a aussi souhaité que les cinq pays membres du Conseil de sécurité (Union Soviétique, Etats-Unis, France, Grande-Bretagne et Chine) se réunissent sans délai pour travailler à la mise en place d'une conférence internationale de paix au Proche-Orient.

L'accès à la tribune du Conseil de sécurité constitue un nouveau succès diplomatique pour le numéro un palestinien, deux jours seulement après l'adoption, au Caire, par l'Internationale socialiste d'une résolution reconnaissant aux Palestiniens le droit de construire un Etat. Il est cependant peu probable que les Nations-Unis répondent favorablement à ses demandes. Les Israéliens ont fait savoir dès

jeudi soir qu'il ne laisseraient entrer aucun observateur de l'ONU. Le porte-parole du premier ministre Yitzhak Shamir a même déclaré qu'une telle démarche serait considérée par Tel Aviv comme «une ingérence dans les affaires intérieures d'Israël».

La Ligue des Etats arabes a condamné les Etats-Unis pour avoir, avant même l'allocution de Yasser Arafat, qu'ils s'opposaient à l'envoi d'observateurs permanents de l'ONU dans les territoires occupés. La Ligue estime en effet qu'il «signifie la permanence de l'occupation». Washington, qui dispose d'un droit de véto aux Nations-Unis, lui préfère une «courte visite» à des fins d'information, a indiqué vendredi un responsable américain.

Aucune décision n'est attendue ce soir à Genève, à l'issue de la réunion des «Cinq». La session du Conseil de sécurité devrait cependant reprendre dès mardi à New York. (D'après agences).

EN BREF

Visite. Le secrétaire au Foreign Office, Douglas Hurd, se rendra en visite officielle en Jordanie du 30 mai au 1er juin, puis en Arabie Saoudite jusqu'au 3 juin, a indiqué Londres jeudi. M. Hurd s'entretiendra à Amman avec son homologue jordanien, Marwan al-Qassem, et sera reçu par le roi Hussein. La dernière visite d'un ministre britannique des Affaires étrangères dans le royaume hachémite remonte à novembre 1987.

Ambassadeur. Le président George Bush a nommé jeudi Roger Harrison au poste d'ambassadeur des Etats-Unis en Jordanie. M. Harrison, diplomate de carrière, enseigne depuis 1989 au Colorado College. Il avait auparavant occupé les fonctions de sous-secrétaire d'Etat pour la Défense et le contrôle des armements, puis de conseiller politique à Tel Aviv, à Londres, à Varsovie et à Manille. Roger Harrison succède en Jordanie à Roscoe Suddarth.

Jérash. Le dixième Festival de la Culture et des Arts de Jérash se déroulera du 11 au 17 juillet prochains, a annoncé cette semaine le ministère jordanien de la Culture. Aucune précision n'a cependant été donnée sur le nombre de pays et de groupes participant cette année à cette manifestation, qui a lieu chaque été sur le site de la cité antique. Le ministère du Tourisme a par ailleurs annoncé le lancement d'une série de spectacles son et lumière à Jérash, en prélude à l'ouverture du festival.

Sommet arabe. Le conseil ministériel de la Ligue arabe a rendu public jeudi les cinq points à l'ordre du jour du sommet arabe extraordinaire, qui s'ouvre demain à Bagdad. Comme prévu, les chefs d'Etat arabes, à l'exception notable du président syrien, aborderont les «menaces dirigées contre la nation arabe (...) notamment contre l'Irak et la Libye» et le «développement de la cause palestinienne, de l'Intifada ainsi que de l'immigration des juifs soviétiques en Israël». Le sommet examinera également les bouleversements politiques en Europe de l'Est, la situation irano-irakienne et la «solidarité» avec la Jordanie.

Gabon. Huit cents des quelque 3.000 ressortissants français de Port Gentil, dans le sud du Gabon, ont profité vendredi du pont aérien mis en place par les renforts militaires français, pour quitter la ville. L'ambassade de France à Libreville, la capitale, a précisé qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'une opération d'évacuation. La situation dans le pays reste cependant tendu depuis l'éclatement des troubles mercredi. Troubles provoqués par le décès dans des conditions obscures d'un opposant au président Bongo.

Pluralisme. Le Parlement polonais, réuni jeudi en séance plénière à Varsovie a approuvé l'instauration du pluralisme et la création de partis politiques dans le pays. La loi, votée par une écrasante majorité de parlementaires, autorise la formation de partis politiques sur simple déclaration devant le tribunal constitutionnel. Elle engage également l'Etat à assurer aux partis l'accès à la radio et à la télévision.

Cigarette. La troisième journée mondiale sans tabac, organisée le 31 mai par l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS), sera principalement orientée vers les jeunes. Selon l'OMS, cette action pour objectif «d'aider les gouvernements, les collectivités, les groupes et les individus à risque à prendre conscience du problème que pose l'usage du tabac pour les enfants et de les encourager à prendre des mesures appropriées pour le combattre».

Déficit. La Croix-Rouge française (CRF) accuse un déficit global de près de 400 millions de francs (quelque 71 millions de dollars) a déclaré mardi à Paris sa présidente, Georgina Dufoix. Cette dernière espère cependant que «la situation de la Croix-Rouge sera en équilibre à la fin de l'année. Pour y parvenir, Mme Dufoix compte fermer de nouveaux établissements de la CRF et procéder à la vente d'une partie du capital immobilier de l'organisation humanitaire.

Racisme. Le tribunal de grande instance de Nanterre, près de Paris, a condamné mercredi le président du Front national (extrême droite), Jean-Marie le Pen, au franc symbolique pour avoir qualifié «point de détail historique l'existence des chambres à gaz». Les juges lui ont notamment reproché d'avoir «banalisé» les persécutions nazies. Cette décision intervient au moment où l'extrême droite et le racisme font faire la une de tous les débats politiques en France.

Universités. Le ministre français de l'Education nationale a présenté mercredi au gouvernement un plan de développement quinquennal des universités, incluant notamment la construction de nouveaux locaux. Les établissements existants ont en effet une capacité de 700.000 places alors que le nombre d'étudiants atteint presque le double cette année. La participation de l'Etat à ce plan a été chiffrée à 16 milliards de francs (2,85 milliards de dollars).

Navette. Le lancement de la navette spatiale américaine Columbia, transportant l'observatoire astronomique «Astro», a été fixé au 30 mai par la NASA. La mission «Astro» avait été initialement prévue en 1986, mais l'explosion de Challenger, en janvier de cette année-là, suivie du gel des lancements, lui a valu de prendre un retard considérable. L'observatoire «Astro», d'un prix de 150 millions de dollars, se compose de 4 télescopes d'étude des rayonnements ultraviolets et des rayons X.

Taylor. L'état de santé de l'actrice américaine Elizabeth Taylor s'est nettement amélioré cette semaine après un mois et demi de lutte contre une pneumonie, qui a failli lui être fatale. La comédienne pourrait même quitter l'hôpital dans les prochains jours, selon les médecins de l'hôpital Saint John de Santa Monica, en Californie.

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"Signes d'Etoffe" au CCF

Une drôle d'impression

Une exposition de tissus imprimés, œuvres du plasticien syrien Moustafa Fathi, s'est ouverte cette semaine au centre culturel français (*). Elle cotoie des photographies de Syrie et des objets de la vie quotidienne des bédouins et nomades de ce pays, dont elle ne s'inspire que très partiellement.

D'un côté, des photos de paysages de Syrie, des kilims, des appliqués, des broderies et des moulins en pain de terre et en bois traditionnels; de l'autre, les imprimés contemporains du plasticien Moustafa Fathi.

Les premiers objets, que les paysans, les nomades bédouins et tous les bédouins de Syrie emploient tous les jours, ne sauront en aucun cas entrer dans l'univers des œuvres d'art. Ils offrent un aperçu de la vie quotidienne des populations traditionnelles et une projection bien étroite de leur condition sociale.

Les imprimés sur coton de Moustafa Fathi, pour leur part, posent problème. Certes, le plasticien, né dans le Horan (région du sud de la Syrie) en 1942, ancien élève de l'Ecole des Beaux Arts de Paris, connaît les traditions de gravure des moulins. Il a voyagé dans toutes les régions de pays, entretenant un rapport privilégié avec le passé qui l'a amené à se définir comme un "artiste populaire".

Il n'empêche. Dans la tradition millénaire de l'impression sur tissu en Syrie, c'est la fabrication des moulins, le choix des signes et autres symboles, ainsi que la technique d'impression qui comptent. L'ordre, le rythme et la couleur des râts sont en rapport étroit avec l'histoire de cette activité artisanale. Or, Moustafa Fathi semble ne pas en tenir compte. Ses tampons et moules ne respectent pas les principes originels de fabrication: le dessin y est en creux, par exemple, quand il devrait être en relief.

L'impression elle-même s'en ressent. Ses imprimés offrent un désordre graphique, présentent des signes hors de toute symbolique et des bavures de couleur d'autant plus plâtrées que tout l'art des ouvriers syriens

résidé dans la netteté de l'application. Autre principe mis à mal: celui de la reproduction. La gravure artisanale s'efforce de rendre possible la copie d'un imprimé. Moustafa Fathi, quant à lui, s'y refuse. Il s'agit, certes, sur ce sujet précis d'un choix. Un choix, qui l'éloigne néanmoins d'une tradition dans la continuité de laquelle il souhaite s'inscrire.

Sabah al-Hadidi.

(*) Voir "A l'affiche".

Passez-moi mon français

Wadi Ram: encyclopédie planétaire

Vale Egeria!

Il s'est passé tant de choses graves et tristes dans cette région, dans ce pays, que le reste, y compris cette correspondance, m'apparaît bien frivole. Je la poursuis cependant par devoir, par amitié pour toi et par amour pour la Jordanie.

Je reviens de Wadi Ram. On appelle génériquement Wadi Ram (qui n'est qu'une des vallées qui le sillonnent) le territoire au sud-est de la Jordanie, parce qu'il est en quelque sorte le plus connu, et a été, pendant des siècles, le passage d'élection des nomades qui revenaient de l'Arabie et y allaient. Il offre un spectacle d'une beauté majestueuse et dramatique, autant par ses montagnes de grès dans lesquelles le vent a sculpté d'étranges formes, que par ses couleurs. La grande fracture qui a séparé la péninsule arabe de l'Afrique, en créant la dépression de la mer Morte et la mer Rouge, contribue à le former.

Les montagnes de la région sont constituées d'un socle de granite précambrien, surmonté par des grès cambriens rouges, ordoviciens gris clair et siluriens blanchâtres. Les nombreuses sources, qu'on y trouve, se forment là où l'eau, qui flotte à travers les couches perméables de grès, rencontre le socle imperméable de granit, qui avec sa légère inclinaison lui permet de sortir en plein air.

Le botaniste trouve à Wadi Ram des essences (vrais fossiles vivants) qui témoignent des changements climatiques advenus dans la région. Ce territoire, en effet, a connu des périodes d'humidité, qui le voyait sinon couvert de forêts sûrement d'une savane où se mêlait aussi une flore méditerranéenne. Quelques exemplaires de cèdres de Lycie, entr'autres, sont encore là pour témoigner. Les fossiles sont nombreux, même les trilobites, qui, avec les éponges, sont la plus ancienne forme de vie de la planète. Ce qui nous ramène en arrière dans le temps, entre 600 et 500 millions d'années.

Le professeur Edoardo Borzatti von Lowenstein, responsable du Laboratoire d'Ecologie du Quaternaire de l'université de Florence, étudie depuis dix-huit ans, avec la collaboration formée de spécialistes des différentes disciplines ethno-anthropologiques, ce territoire, qui semble être une véritable encyclopédie de notre planète. Il s'est retrouvé, en effet, face à une foule de pièces archéologiques, qui semblent montrer que les lieux ont été habités, sans interruption, depuis la préhistoire. Ce conte, vieux de 400.000 ans, est assez compliqué à lire, mais il semble vouloir se dévoiler, bien qu'avec beaucoup de réticence, à ce gentilhomme menu de taille, aux réflexes rapides et dont les yeux semblent regarder et voir loin.

Borzatti donc, s'est demandé entre autre, s'il était possible de refaire la génèse du nomadisme. Est-il vrai qu'il descend, depuis le néolithique (et comme l'affirme souvent la littérature anthropologique) des communautés agricoles sédentaires? Ou, au contraire, serait-il permis de soutenir que l'origine des nomades remonte directement à la matrice culturelle qui ressemble à la leur, c'est à dire celle des anciennes communautés de chasseurs paléolithiques?

Déjà, une première difficulté d'interprétation surgit avec le bouleversement des couches superficielles du terrain, provoqué par la violente action des agents climatiques: une forte érosion, une grande amplitude thermique entre le jour et la nuit, le sable qui s'est déposé dans les vallées en une couche d'au moins 150 mètres d'épaisseur, le vent et l'eau qui ont profondément entaillé les rochers et transporté pierres et sable en mélangeant, très souvent, des témoignages préhistoriques d'époques différentes.

Changement drastique

La recherche minutieuse menée par le groupe de Florence a permis, malgré tout, de découvrir des sites d'une extrême antiquité. C'est en 1982 que l'équipe paléolithique a trouvé un gisement lithique qui est, pour le moment, le plus ancien de Jordanie et peut-être aussi du Moyen-Orient. A Bata el-Ghoul, aux confins de l'Arabie Saoudite, une tribu de chasseurs se rassemblait il y a quelque 400.000 ans pour fabriquer ses armes et se réorganiser. Ils vivaient de chasse et de fruits sauvages, mais ils connaissaient déjà le feu et mangeaient leur viande cuite. En ce temps-là, la flore était abondante et permettait une cueillette facile.

Ce gisement appartient à l'âge aculéen. Les traces des périodes plus récentes, telles que le paléolithique moyen (120.000-35.000 ans) sont beaucoup plus nombreuses et celles du paléolithique supérieur ont donné des résultats complexes et particulièrement intéressants: il semblerait que cette période, qui marque la fin de l'ère tertiaire, se soit conclue en Jordanie avec une véritable avance sur le reste du monde, pour laisser place à des cultures profondément nouvelles. Ce changement drastique, en effet, n'a lieu en Europe qu'autour de l'an 10.000 av. J.-C., tandis qu'il se présente en Jordanie quelques dizaines de milliers d'années auparavant. Des gisements, qu'on peut dater autour de 14.000-13.000 av. J.-C., le prouvent.

Pour des raisons qui sont encore obscures, l'équilibre économique des tribus de chasseurs paléolithiques, qui n'avait jamais été modifié, se rompt et se conforme à de nouveaux modèles socio-économiques de vie. Déjà en 1925, V. Gordon Childe avait souligné l'importance de ce

Voilà pour aujourd'hui. Sans doute t'ai-je assommé avec des mots savants et pseudo-savants, mais pouvais-je faire autrement pour te faire partager l'admiration que j'éprouve pour la personne et les travaux de Borzatti? Vale!

Flavia Romero.



A L'AFFICHE

Récital de piano au RCC En mode mineur

Mardi 29 mai au centre culturel royal, la pianiste jordanienne Rula Nabil interprétera et commentera deux œuvres de Mozart ("Fantasia" en Ré mineur et la Sonate en La mineur) ainsi la Sonate en Ré mineur, Op. 31, N. 2, surnommée "La Tempête" de Beethoven.

Propose-t-elle, avec ce programme à cheval sur les XVIIIe et XIXe siècles, de démontrer l'évolution de la sonate classique? "Pas du tout. Ce que je propose est de créer un climat musical inspiré par un choix de mode. Toutes les œuvres sont en mineur", explique-t-elle. Et pourquoi pas en majeur? "Parce que c'est une nouveauté pour moi et c'est une belle surprise. Je ne la travaille que depuis deux mois. Par contre, j'ai déjà interprété la "Fantasia" de Beethoven, je vis avec depuis deux ans déjà.

Dans le programme, la "Fantasia" ne semble avoir aucun rapport avec les autres œuvres. Pourquoi l'avoit choisie? "Aucun rapport? Pas vrai. La fantaisie est une forme voisine de la sonate. Je m'en sers comme introduction, comme une ouverture. Sa structure libre et informelle me donne l'occasion d'introduire de façon badine le mode mineur, avant d'attaquer au plat de résistance".

S'agit-il de Mozart ou de Beethoven? "La question ne se pose pas", s'exclame-t-elle en se mettant aussitôt à jouer. Accords majestueux. C'est Beethoven. "La Tempête". Elle joue quelques mesures du début: Largo Allegro. Du deuxième mouvement: Adagio. Elle continue, et c'est l'Allegretto, jusqu'à la fin surprise.

nante, silencieuse.

Désire-t-elle nous livrer une nouvelle interprétation de la "Tempête", qu'elle connaît si bien? "Du nouveau? Disons du plus précis. J'ai parlé, pour la soirée, d'un climat musical. Ça va au-delà: c'est un état d'âme que je veux évoquer, celui de

Beethoven au moment où il a écrit cette sonate. Pour y parvenir, il m'a fallu rapprocher les idées musicales que j'ai découvertes de la vie du compositeur, avant de me laisser inspirer par cette rencontre.

Mozart a composé sa sonate entre 1777 et 1779, à une époque où il ressentait beaucoup d'écœurement. Beethoven a écrit la "Tempête" au moment où il découvrait qu'il devenait sourd et il pensait au suicide". Rula s'attaque au clavier. "Il cherchait les sons". Autre accord. "Une intonation, qui traduirait ses sentiments face à ce destin".

En mode mineur? "Mais oui. Ce mode est farouche. La "Tempête" est une illustration des recherches qu'il a entrepris dans ce mode, en 1803, en plein désespoir, pour se frayer une nouvelle voie". Ces remarques sont-elles un avant-goût de ce qu'elle expliquera au public mardi soir? "Ce que j'ai à dire est mon secret". La pianiste jordanienne rejoue la dernière mesure de la "Tempête". "Qu'entendez-vous?", demande-t-elle. Le silence... "Non, vous vous trompez! La musique continue... au-delà... dans une autre sphère..."

Sami Kamal.

EXPOSITIONS

Signes d'Etoffe. Kilims, broderies, talismans... Les pièces exposées font partie de la vie quotidienne des paysans et bédouins de Syrie. S'y ajoutent les créations du plasticien Moustafa Fathi. Centre culturel français, jusqu'au 31 mai. Entrée libre. Tél: 636445.

DIVERS

Danse. Le Jeune Ballet de France présente un spectacle en 25 tableaux, véritable anthologie de la danse classique occidentale. Centre culturel royal, jeudi 31 mai à 20h00. Prix des places: 4 dinars.

CONFÉRENCES

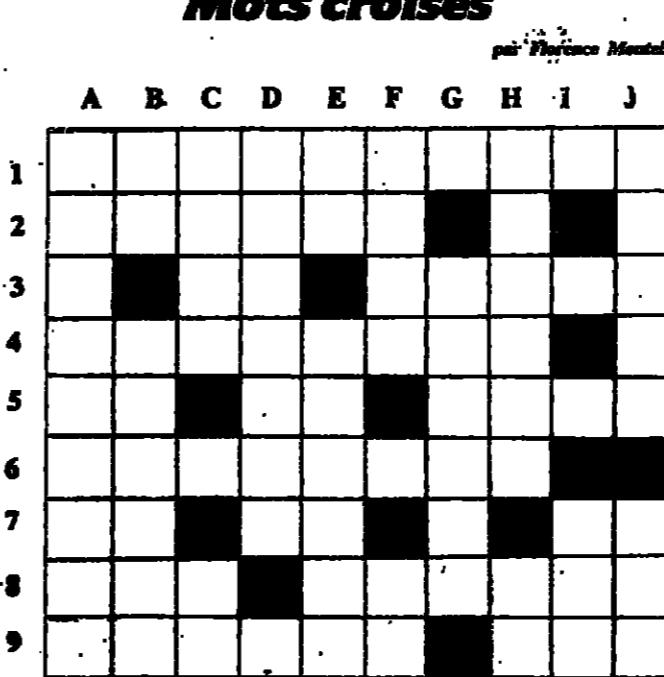
Charles Nodier. Le directeur du CCF présente l'intellectuel français, qui, à cheval sur les XIXe et XXe siècles, est à la fois le "parrain" des romantiques et un précurseur du surréalisme. Centre culturel français, mercredi 30 mai à 18h00 (en français).

CONCERTS

Récital. La pianiste jordanienne Rula Nabil interprète trois œuvres de Mozart et Beethoven. Centre culturel royal, mardi 29 mai à 20h00. Prix des places: 3 dinars. Tél: 661026. (Voir FOCUS.)

J E U X

Mots croisés



Horizontalement.

1: représentations. 2: indigots. 3: la française; qui a un gros ventre. 4: élévent. 5: forme d'avoir; adjec- tif possessif; précis. 6: sacrifiées; 7: négation; a vu le jour; pronom personnel. 8: longue période; éprouves. 9: les socres des parents; enlevé. 10: spécialité; évaluer.

(Solution la semaine prochaine)

Solution de la grille N. 11:

Horizontalement.

A: rapportera. B: énorme; na. Ci dotable; cc. D: en; tranché. E: tiendras. F: on; colit. G: cités; se; rachats; us. H: voleurs. I: rame; émeus. J: sur; ss.

Verticalement.

1: redécouvre. 2: étonn; ou; 3: pot; 4: praticien. 5: ombré; tâta. 6: relâcher. 7: endouces. 8: en; cru; 9: rachats; us. 10: ces; étes.

(Solution la semaine prochaine)

LE SAVIEZ-VOUS ?

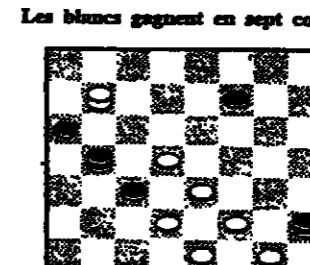
JEANNE D'ARC EPILEPTIQUE? Les voix appelant Jeanne d'Arc à bouter les Anglais hors de France résultent peut-être de crises d'épilepsie déclenchées par le son des cloches, selon les très sérieux travaux de deux neurologues américaines. «Flutit qu'une psychopathe, comme l'ont affirmé certains, elle apparaît comme une fille victime de crises d'épilepsie, qui ont transformé ses hallucinations en puissante source de passion religieuse et de dévotion sociale», estiment-elles. Selon les deux chercheuses, "Jeanne la Bonne Lorraine" présentait une série de traits de caractère souvent rencontrés chez les patients souffrant de cette forme particulière d'épilepsie: le sentiment d'une destinée personnelle, un approfondissement de toutes les émotions, des sentiments de grandeur et de joie, un grand moralisme, de solides convictions religieuses et une absence de libido.

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DAMES

Problème N. 12.

Les blancs gagnent en sept coups.



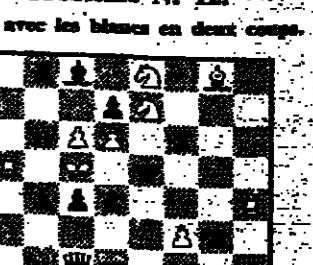
Solution du problème N. 11:

B. 19-15; N. 26-12; B. 10-13; N. 1-28; B. 13-8.

ÉCHECS

Problème N. 12.

Mat avec les blancs en deux coups.



Solution du problème N. 11:

D7-c8.

Men for a change

Men rarely share responsibility for family planning. And male decision-makers tend to give little thought to issues like maternal and infant mortality. But if men do not accept that family planning plays a major role in the survival of our planet, we are all heading for trouble, warns the 1990 State of World Population Report from the United Nations Population Fund. **Mark Thomas** reports from Thailand.

THAI men have long played a central role in their country's family planning effort — as obstacles.

During the 1930s and 1940s in Thailand, under the dictatorship of Plaek Phibunsongkhram, awards were given out on Mother's Day to women with large families. These pro-natalist policies, which held sway for decades, were driven by the notion that a large population was needed to build up military strength.

Only in the early 1970s did things change. The Thai government undertook to reduce the population growth rate by 0.5 percentage points a year. It now became clear that large population growth was slowing down development, and that poverty might be alleviated by reducing family size.

Thousands of village family planning volunteers were mobilised. And the campaign worked: birth-rates more than halved during the course of the next 15 years.

Today, nearly 70 per cent of married couples practice family planning and 95 per cent of couples do not want more than two children. Most cite economic reasons for their choice.

This success has made Thailand a family planning model for other developing countries. But it is women who can take the credit. Men remain a bastion of traditional resistance. In 1987, for example, 68 per cent of women were practising some form of contraception compared with only seven per cent of men.

The figures are skewed towards women — and not only in Thailand — partly because most contraceptive methods are designed for women. Equally important, however, is attitude. Whereas boys are coddled by most Thai parents, girls are taught from a young age to take responsibility. As adults, too, there is little incentive for Thai males to accept responsibility for family planning. Many con-



Gimmicks — such as getting elephants to distribute free condoms — may not always change male attitudes towards contraception. But they certainly arouse curiosity — and that is a start in trying to get men to share responsibility for family planning (UNFPA photo).

oted. Vasectomy takes 15 minutes, costs half as much as female sterilization — and is less likely to cause side-effects.

Mechai has already given Thailand a certain notoriety by staging mass vasectomy fairs each year on the birthday of Thailand's king. In 1987, a record was set when more than 2,000 men showed up at a field next to the royal palace for the free operation.

Despite the fanfare, however, far fewer men than women opt to be sterilized. The total number of men sterilised in 1987 was 16,447. The figure for women that same year was close to 140,000.

"Men don't do it (have a vasectomy) because they're not the ones to get pregnant," says Patama Bhironrat, the Ministry of Public Health's senior family planning promotion specialist.

Communication is another problem. Women can find out

about female sterilization during pregnancy from medical personnel or village midwives. But men retain their traditional attitudes and superstitions. A recent survey in Thailand's north-east showed that men were worried about rumored links between the operation and impotence, poor health and work disability.

Now the Thai Association for Voluntary Sterilization is seeking to remove some of these prejudices and to enlighten men. One thing they have discovered is that men need support to go ahead with the operation — and not have second thoughts about it later. Most who had the operation were influenced by people they respected or trusted, like community leaders or friends or entertainers who had had the operation themselves. "Men should be motivated to like birth control," the survey concludes.

Arab turning point expected at Baghdad

(Continued from page 1)

was "trying to bridge the gap" between American and the Arab, particularly the Palestinian, positions by convincing the Arab summit not make a specific reference to an international peace conference.

"This would have been a disaster," a PLO official commented. "The Arab and Palestinian people are expecting a confrontation strategy, not more concessions," he added.

Despite Egyptian reservations on strongly worded resolutions which might provoke the U.S. observers believe that several

draft resolutions, in essence, presented a spirit of confrontation. They cite the resolutions concerning Iraq and Jordan in particular as reflecting this new "spirit."

They noted that the draft resolution concerning Jordan clearly linked Israel's settlement policies and Jewish immigration with the Kingdom's national security.

The draft resolution, describing Israel's settlement policy as posing a serious threat to Jordan's national security, was viewed here as pressure on the U.S. to take a firm position over its financial and military support for Israel.

The summit is also expected unanimously to approve a resolu-

tion obliging all countries to support, by all means, Jordan's steadfastness.

No information was available whether this resolution would be translated into concrete financial aid for Jordan.

The draft resolution on Iraq constitutes a clear challenge to the U.S. in more than one count. It stresses Iraq's right to defend itself by "any means... if it is attacked."

Second, it affirms Iraq's right "to develop its technological abilities."

If these two resolutions are passed, they would be the strongest Arab reaction to Western criticism of Iraq's possession

of chemical weapons, according to analysts.

In fact, Western criticism of Iraq's possession of chemical weapons, and the recent uproar over alleged Iraqi attempts to boost its arsenal, had prompted the Arab foreign ministers to include for the first time a whole section dedicated to technology. The section, which was supported by Egypt, stressed "the right of all Arab countries to possess and develop advanced technology."

The Arab foreign ministers, however, recommended to their leaders a clear resolution calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons and other lethal weapons from Middle East.

Several Arab delegations in Saturday's debate called for U.N. protection of Palestinians.

Like Arafat, Abdulridha Abdullah Khoury of the United Arab Emirates called on the United States to pressure Israel towards a Middle East peace settlement.

Bangladesh delegate Hamid-Ur-Rashid likened Israeli policies to fascism.

By far the most violent attack on Israel Saturday came from Iran, which promised all-out support in the "struggle against the Zionist entity so as to dismantle this source of mischief, instability and aggression."

At a press conference, Deputy Foreign Minister Hosseini Sheikholeslam termed the Jewish state "illegal" and reiterated that Iran rejects any proposals for an international peace conference.

He called Israel a "cancerous tumor" and said its government "should be eliminated."

Security Council adjourns Geneva session

(Continued from page 1)

would not oppose such a mission. Picketing did not speak in the council.

Arafat, in an unprecedented speech to the council Friday, called for a U.N. emergency force to be sent to the area to protect the Arab population and urged sanctions against Israel.

A U.S. official made plain Saturday that Washington would veto any council resolution containing those points.

"There are obviously elements of the speech we don't agree with," the official said on condition of anonymity.

Such a team would include representatives of several countries rather than personal representatives of Perez De Cuelar and would presumably mount a wider probe than a special envoy.

Balton called the meeting after an Israeli gunman shot dead eight Palestinian workers in the occupied territories Sunday and

16 more Arabs died and 500 were wounded as Palestinians took to the streets in protest in the days which followed.

Diplomats said it was possible something could be agreed next week in New York, but Arab delegates had hoped for concrete action this weekend so that Arafat would not have to travel empty-handed to the Arab summit starting in Baghdad Monday.

Egypt proposed that ambassadors of Security Council members France, Canada and Ethiopia investigate the violence, but Israel made clear it would reject any action under council auspices.

"We do not accept Security Council jurisdiction in this matter. Anything related to security (in the occupied territories) is of our province and of our province alone," Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a news conference.

"You (the United States) have completely spoilt your naughty

clashes between troops and stone-throwing demonstrators broke out in the West Bank when curfews were lifted in some areas Saturday. Palestinian sources said they said soldiers shot and wounded three Palestinians in Jenin.

They said there were also clashes in the cities of Nablus and Ramallah but no one was injured. Troops arrested three Palestinians in Bethlehem.

In Arab East Jerusalem, police fired live ammunition to disperse demonstrators.

Uprising leaders call for attacks on soldiers

(Continued from page 1)

and bread and some parents were letting children sneak out to shop.

Israel lifted the Gaza curfew for two hours Thursday so residents could buy food.

Sunday's "killings" sparked

several days of furious protests in the occupied territories, in which 16 Arabs were killed and almost 900 wounded.

In the West Bank, about 100,000 Arabs in Hebron and surrounding refugee camps remained under curfew Saturday.

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Women count, but are not counted

LONDON — If life is tough for women in developed countries, it is tougher in the Third World. The Human Development Report published for UNDP shows that Third World women get less of everything — except suffering.

Female children in developing countries get less food, less health care and less education. In some countries, more girl babies die before their fifth birthday than boys. Adult women get less education, less professional training and less pay even when they work longer hours than men. In some societies women have few or no property rights.

"Many countries are obviously ignoring the high social dividends of investing in women," observes Mabbub Ul Haq, Special Adviser to UNDP Administrator William H. Draper, and principal author of the report. He points out that higher female literacy results in lower infant mortality, better family nutrition, reduced fertility and lower population growth. The report cites Bangladesh, where children of illiterate

mothers face five times higher child mortality than those of mothers with at least seven years of schooling.

Nothing illustrates the magnitude of female deprivation more than statistics for maternal mortality. The risk of death for an expectant mother in some developing countries is fifty times that in industrialised nations. "No other North-South gap in human development is wider than that between maternal mortality rates," says the report, describing it as "a symbol of the neglect of women's health in the Third World."

High mortality rates have devastating social consequences. Maternal mortality rates were 1,000 or more per 100,000 live births in Somalia, Bhutan, Ghana and Congo, and were over 400 per 100,000 in 14 more countries. Most of these countries have high infant mortality rates as well.

Neglect of women's well being takes many forms and starts early, says the report. Female children are fed poorly, clothed

cheaply and often not sent to school nor taken to the doctor. Families in India's rural Punjab spend more than twice as much on the medical care of male infants as on that of female infants. And spending on clothing there is 40 per cent higher for boys than for girls.

Discrimination against women is reinforced in education. Even men living in rural areas have better literacy levels than the overall literacy rate for urban women. The female literacy rate for the developing world as a whole is now three-quarters that of the male. "The gap has narrowed slightly in the last three decades, but much progress remains to be made," the report says.

There still are 17 developing countries where twice as many boys attend secondary school as girls. In 16 countries, female primary school enrolment is less than two-thirds that of males.

The true extent of discrimination against women is not re-

vealed by official statistics. Much of the work that women do remains "invisible" in national accounting and censuses. Women typically work about 25 per cent longer hours than men. Much of their work — including household work and growing subsistence crops — is unpaid. But women's remuneration is less of lower rates and because they usually wind up in low paid jobs such as agriculture and informal sectors.

The report for the first time calculated separate human development indices for males and females. The results are devastating. Even in those developing countries which have achieved high human development levels, gender discrimination is very pronounced.

The report recommends that more investment be made in women as an integral part of the human development strategies for the 1990s — UNDP press Release.

Journalist finds Jordan 'healthier'

By Joumana Hakkas

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan is in a healthier situation because it has led the Middle East region in a democratic experiment, according to British historian Patrick Seale.

Seale, who is here with a U.N. journalists delegation, said Jordan's 1988 decision to disengage itself from the West Bank had resulted in a better Jordanian-Palestinian relationship and gave the initiative to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which is now seeking dialogue with Israel through Egyptian help.

Seale said the U.S. had a "great responsibility" towards revitalising the Middle East peace process, "especially as (it is) today the only power in the world."

However, it was also "very important for the Arabs to speak with one voice to impress on Washington the urgency of the situation," Seale told the Jordan Times.

Seale, a journalist and author, cited several factors as adding urgency to efforts to settle the Middle East conflict, including the nuclear missile proliferation in the region, the Israeli rightist trend towards extremism and the massive influx of Soviet Jews into Israel and "inevitably into the occupied territories." According to Seale, the "collapse" of Soviet power and the continuing reluctance of the United States to involve itself deeper in the peace process are the main factors that hinder the achievement of peace in the Middle East region.

Mahmoud El Said, head of the delegation, which is currently on a visit to Jordan on the third leg of a trip which will include Egypt, said a visit to the Middle East was enough to convince any journalist of the realities on the ground and transmit it to the world at large.

"Our visit provides the opportunity to high level journalists from various European and North American countries to learn all the facts about the situation in the Middle East and various aspects of the Palestinian question," El Said told the Jordan Times.

"There is an urgent need for a comprehensive peace settlement in the

Middle East," he said. The delegation was briefed on Jordan's position by senior officials, including Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin and director of the Department of Palestinian Affairs at the Foreign Ministry Ahmad Qatana. The delegation will be received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan before its departure for Cairo Sunday.

El Said, an Egyptian who works for the U.N. Public Information Department, said he supported the Arab call for an international peace conference on the Middle East. "Every year the U.N. contacts all the parties," he said. "All Arab sides (except Lebanon whose official functions are limited due to the civil war there) receive the delegation," the journalist said. "But Israel always refuses to receive them or allow them into the occupied territories."

Mr. Michel Roy, a journalist for Montreal's *L'Actualité*, who visited Jordan several times, lamented the stagnated efforts for peace in the Middle East. "I hope there will be progress in the solution for the Palestinian problem, and the Americans would have some influence on Israel strong enough to change the course," he said. "It's very important for a journalist living in America to come over here to understand and feel the problem."

Roy also said he was pleased with the recent changes in Jordan, including the Kingdom's moves to resolve its economic crisis, the democratisation process and freedom of the press. "The people in America must know and be well informed (of the situation) to be in a position to pressure their governments and leaders" into striving for a just solution in the Middle East, he added.

Mr. Kentaro Hiryama of Japan's NHK television said Tokyo was supportive of a "peace solution based on U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 respecting the Palestinian rights for self-determination, including their right to establish an independent state and also the recognition of the PLO as a representative organisation of the Palestinian people."

The journalists are in the Middle East on a fact-finding mission arranged every year by the United Nations General Assembly. The head of the delegation is expected to draft a report on the team's findings and submit it to the U.N. General Secretariat as a document to be presented to the General Assembly.

APPOINTMENT IN ITALY

AMMAN-ROME

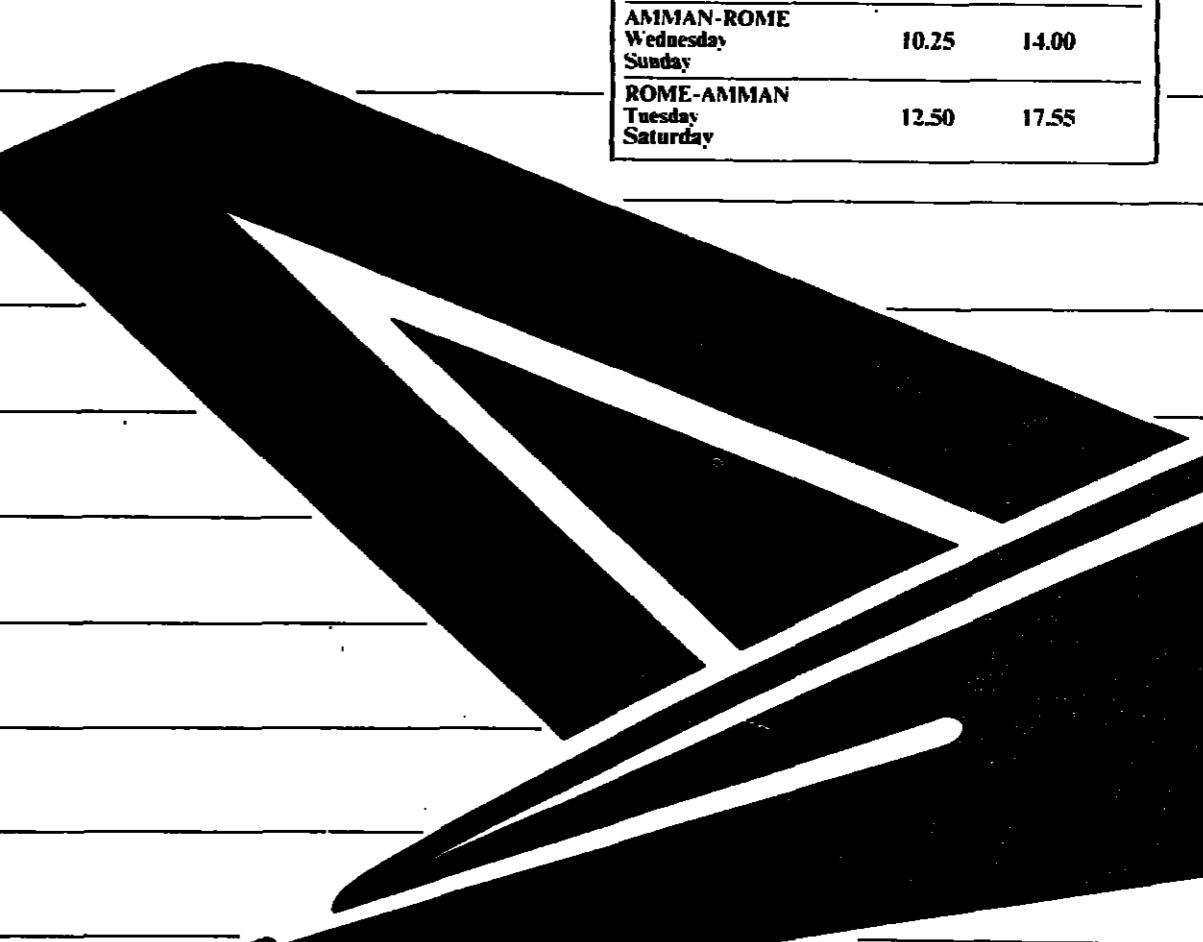
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Tyson leaves hiding to resume training

LAS VEGAS (AP) — When last seen in public with boxing gloves on, Mike Tyson was lying on the canvas in the Tokyo Dome before 40,000 shocked Japanese and one jubilant Buster Douglas.

In the stifling heat of a tin-can gymnasium this week, Tyson had a "coming out" party of sorts, breaking his veil of secrecy to go five rounds with two sparring partners in front of a handful of writers and photographers.

"I kind of almost glad to see you guys," he told the writers. "I must be a b***a. I can't wait to get back in front of a crowd again."

If Tyson is a b***a, he didn't show it before Thursday's workout at the Golden Gloves gym.

Aside from mandatory appearances at three press conferences promoting his June 16 comeback fight against Henry Tillman, Tyson's entourage has kept him sheltered and his workouts private.

Even his sparring partners aren't quite sure they should be talking about the former champion.

"It's been kind of hush-hush around here," Refus Hadley told a writer. "I don't know if it's okay for me to talk to you."

The secrecy had some questioning both of his state of mind and his state of conditioning following the devastating knockout loss at the hands of Douglas. Tyson's moodiness at the press conferences only added to the speculation.

"I was really never depressed," Tyson said after his workout. "It's nothing to cry over. You just pick yourself back up and brush yourself off and come back."

Tyson appeared trim and fit as he worked three four-minute rounds against upcoming heavyweight Rodolfo Marin and two more rounds with Hadley, a sparring partner he has used since 1977.

With a trio of trainers — including newly installed Richie Giachetti — looking on, the former champion managed to land some good shots against the two fighters but took some as well during the workout.

"His intensity level is a lot higher than I've ever seen it," Hadley said, still trying to catch his breath after the session. "He gets in there and doesn't hold back nothing. That's the mark of a true champion."

Giachetti barked most of the instructions to Tyson, with an occasional command from Jay Bright, who along with Aaron Showell was roundly criticised for not preparing Tyson properly for Douglas and for a weak performance in his corner.

Giachetti insisted the three trainers were equals, although he appeared more equal than the other two.

"This is team Tyson," said Giachetti, who trained former heavyweight champion Larry Holmes. "Everyone is here for the same reason."

Mize leads Atlanta Golf

MARIETTA, Georgia (AP) — Former Masters champion Larry Mize shot a 3-under-par 69 to build a one-shot lead in the second round of the Atlanta Golf Classic Friday.

Mize had a 9-under-par 135 total for his two trips over the hilly, 7,018-yard Atlanta country club course to hold the lead he had shared with Australian Wayne Grady and upstart Steve Lowery in the opening round.

"I'm pretty happy with the way I played," Mize said. "I struck the ball fairly solid."

He held a one-shot advantage over Howard Twitty, who shot his second 68 in a quest for his first victory since winning the greater Hartford Open 10 years ago.

Poor chip shots over the green cost Mize his only bogeys, on the seventh and ninth holes, but he capped the day with a 15-foot birdie putt on the 18th.

"Larry always seems to be the same, very upbeat and positive," said playing partner Curtis Strange, the two-time U.S. Open champion who rallied from Thursday's 73 with a 67 Friday, leaving him five shots off the pace.

"He's playing good now," Strange said of Mize.

South African Nick Price, who tied for second last week in the Colonial, was alone in third place with a 69 for 137.

Morris Hatalsky had the best round of the first two days, a 7-under 65.

Phoenix slows Portland

PHOENIX (AP) — The Phoenix Suns made sure the Portland Trail Blazers had no more comeback magic Friday night.

Tom Chambers scored 15 of his 24 points as the Suns built a 30-point lead in the first half and went on to beat the Trail Blazers 123-89, cutting their lead to 2-1 in the Western Conference finals.

Phoenix, which blew a 22-point lead in game 2 at Portland Wednesday night, plays host again Sunday in game 4 of the best-of-7 series.

The Suns took a first-quarter advantage of 40-18, the most opening-period points ever allowed by Portland in a playoff game. Phoenix built 61-51 and 40-40 leads in second period en route to a 71-43 halftime margin.

The Trail Blazers got no closer than 25 in the second half. The Suns' largest lead was 103-57 with 1:06 left in the third quarter, putting Portland in jeopardy of losing by the largest margin ever in an NBA playoff game.

Minneapolis beat St. Louis 133-75 in 1956, but the Trail Blazers' reserves used an 18-0 run in the fourth period to make the final score more respectable.

It was Portland's worst playoff loss ever and the second-biggest postseason victory for Phoenix.

Chambers was 11-for-13 from the field and Jeff Hornacek scored 17 points on 8-for-10 shooting. Kevin Johnson also had 17 points for the Suns, and Jerome Kersey led the Trail Blazers with 16.

Phoenix made 78 per cent of its shots in the opening period — 18 of 23.

Portland, which shot only 33 per cent from the field in the first period (16 of 27), scored the game's first basket and never led again.

The Suns used a 10-0 run for a 16-4 lead with 8:20 remaining in the first quarter. Chambers had six of his 10 points in the period during the final three minutes.

Eddie Johnson's hook and two free throws capped a 10-0 spurt for a 50-22 Phoenix lead 4:11 into the second period.

The Suns led by 30 points twice — 61-31 on Chambers' baseline jumper 4:28 before halftime and 70-40 on Kurt Rambis' jumper with 42 seconds left.

Terry Porter, held to five first-half points, hit a 3-point goal with 35 seconds remaining to make it 71-43 at intermission.

The Suns shot 77 per cent from the field in the first half (30 of 39) to Portland's 40 per cent (20 of 50).

The bobbing Chicago Bulls

Swedes eye French Open

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP) — Sweden's domination of men's tennis has faded but Stefan Edberg is confident he can become no. 1 by winning the French Open.

"I know I have an excellent chance to make it," says Edberg, a finalist on Roland Garros' clay courts in Paris last year and the top-seed this time in the absence of top-ranked Ivan Lendl.

Edberg, 24, and fast-improving Magnus Gustafsson, 23, who is seeded no. 15 in the tournament and ranked a career-high 20th, are the only seeded Swedes in Paris.

It's a tournament of Swedish

men have dominated more than

any other grand slam event, making 13 of 16 singles finals since

1974 and winning nine of them.

In the 1980s, Swedes made all but

10 of 16 finals and won half of

them.

Edberg, who won one Wimbledo

n and two Australian Open

titles in addition to two grand

slam doubles crowns since 1985,

lost last year's French Open final

to Michael Chang.

A Swede has not been ranked

no. 1 for 17 months. Mats Wilander

held the top spot for four

months after beating Lendl in the

U.S. Open in 1988.

In the last two years, the num-

ber of Swedes ranked in the top

30 has dropped by 50 per cent.

While other nations have

copied Sweden's successful junior

programme, Swedish officials and

coaches say recruiting in their

own country has slowed among

the early teens. Too little money

is spent on top prospects, some

say.

The Swedes' recent glory days

in men's world tennis started with

Bjorn Borg, who won an unpre-

cedented five straight Wimbledo

titles, the last in 1980. He won the

endurance test at Roland Garros

in Paris six times, the last in 1981.

Then came Edberg, Wilander,

double star Anders Jarryd and

others, inspired by Borg and a new

junior programme.

The Swedish construction firm

Siab sponsored the venture and

women's tour in ascendancy and

the men's circuit in disarray.

The women's game is alive with

compelling storylines:

Steffi Graf, the virtually un-

beatable player of the past few

years, finds her match in 16-year-

old Monica Seles. Martina Navratilova, the 33-year-old former

champion, fights to stay near the

top. The 14-year-old American

sensation Jennifer Capriati

threatens to surpass them all be-

fore she's reached high school.

None of the men can approach

Seles' winning streak of 24

straight matches and five con-

secutive tournaments, let alone

the 66-match run that Graf had

going before being stopped by

Seles at the German Open last

week.

"We have a lot more marquee

players now," says Navratilova.

"The field is a lot more open than

it was a couple years ago. There

are a lot more players who can

win tournaments."

The men's ATP tour, mean-

while, has been plagued by in-

juries, late withdrawals, con-

troversy over appearance money

and a dearth of superstars.

Ivan Lendl, Boris Becker, Ste-

fan Edberg, Andre Agassi, Mats

Wilander and John McEnroe

have played sparingly. Last year's

sensation, French Open cham-

pion Michael Chang, has won

only two matches all year.

"Tennis is in a period of transi-

tion right now," says Mark Miles,

the new chief executive officer of

the Association of Tennis

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Please contact USAID, Executive Office, Personnel, Tel. 604171 for additional details concerning duties and minimum qualifications. Resumes, with references, and a two-page summary economic analytical writing sample, in English, should be submitted no later than June 15, 1990 to the following address:

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DIRTY HARRY

Yeltsin fails in initial bid to become president of Russia

MOSCOW (AP) — Populist Boris Yeltsin lost his initial bid Saturday to become president of the Soviet Union's largest republic, falling just short of the absolute majority needed from Russian lawmakers.

Yeltsin garnered 503 votes, 28 short of the majority of the 1,060 deputies he needed. His rival, Communist Party functionary Ivan Polozkov, received 479 votes.

With neither candidate elected, the Russian Congress of People's Deputies, parliament, must reopen nominations.

Deputies say Yeltsin may run again, or a new compromise candidate with better chances of winning a majority may surface.

Yeltsin's demands for faster reform led to a clash with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, but he has made a strong political

comeback and has the backing of millions of Muscovites.

The candidate backed by Gorbachev, Russian Premier Alexander Vasilev, withdrew from the race Friday after it became clear he lacked Yeltsin's popularity.

During his campaign, Yeltsin angered Gorbachev with calls for sovereignty for the Russian Republic, which includes Moscow, the seat of national leadership.

Gorbachev accused Yeltsin Wednesday of being anti-Socialist and said his plans for Russian autonomy would mean the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Yeltsin pledged Friday that if

elected he would defend the republic from Kremlin interference, but could bury personal differences and work with Gorbachev.

Yeltsin was deposed as Moscow party chief after blasting Gorbachev for the slow pace of the Kremlin's reforms, but his popularity among Muscovites was proven when he won election to the national parliament by a landslide.

He also is a member of the Communist Party Central Committee.

With his bass voice booming

through the hall of the great Kremlin Palace, Yeltsin Friday described for the congress his plans to promote Russian sovereignty, open a market economy, increase housing and food stores with consumer goods.

"We are in a situation where we are being manipulated. Everything is being done to enable anyone to win except Yeltsin," said Bella Kurkova, one of the country's most popular television commentators.

Lithuania premier sees independence in 2 years

WEST BERLIN (R) — Lithuania's Prime Minister said Saturday her rebel Baltic republic could be independent in two years and that attempts to stop that process could cost Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev his job.

Kazimiera Pruskiene told Reuters the independence movement in the Baltic states and events in Russia were natural processes that could not be stopped.

On Friday Gorbachev appeared to rule out special measures to speed up sovereignty.

"We are ready to reach agree-

ment and mutual understanding for a period of no less than five years.

Asked about this, Pruskiene said: "I believe it is also possible to achieve (independence) in up to two years."

Earlier in the week, a senior Lithuanian official had said Gorbachev had offered to push through independence in two or three years if the republic suspended its declaration.

Lithuania said the offer was not enough, but Pruskiene left the door open for negotiations.

"We are ready to reach agree-

"What is happening in the Baltic region and in Russia itself is a natural process and it is hardly possible to stop that by order or on the wish of one person," Pruskiene said, speaking in German.

She said Lithuania, which has been hit by an economic blockade imposed by Moscow, was aware it would not be possible to solve the crisis in months but was always ready to talk.

"There have to be negotiations. It is impossible to talk unilaterally about reaching an agreement," she said.

Squabble over Quebec throws Canadian government into crisis

OTTAWA (AP) — Three provincial leaders have thrown Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's government into crisis and provoked new fears of French-speaking Quebec's secession.

Mulroney was spending the weekend in intense one-on-one conferences with the provincial premiers, hoping to find a compromise and salvage what is known as the Meech Lake Agreement before a June 23 deadline.

Quebec refused to sign Canada's 1982 constitution. A proposed amendment containing five major points essential in Quebec's eyes was agreed to and signed by Mulroney and all 10 premiers at Meech Lake, near Ottawa, in 1987. They set a three-year deadline for ratification by all provincial legislatures.

The governments changed in three provinces, and the new

premiers — Clyde Wells of Newfoundland, Gary Filmon of Manitoba and Frank McKenna of New Brunswick — balked at the Meech Lake Agreement.

Of the five points, the most troublesome for many opponents — and virtually the only one the public remembers — would define Quebec as a "distinct society" from the rest of Canada.

Quebec has been careful to make no threatening noises, but Premier Robert Bourassa has repeated that while he is willing to consider further discussion later on the concerns of the dissenting provinces, Quebec will accept no changes whatever to the agreement signed three years ago.

"I have this terrible feeling that we're capable of blowing this," said Alberta Premier Donald Getty, a strong Meech backer, after his meeting with Mulroney.

"We are gambling with our country here and the enormity of that should sink into people's minds."

Interviews with a wide range of Quebecois indicate many of them feel they are once again being rejected by English Canada. On the other hand, many Anglophone Canadians think Quebec is seeking special treatment, privileges and powers. This is sometimes coloured by strong anti-French feelings.

Temperatures mounted several degrees with the sudden resignation last week of Lucien Bouchard, Mulroney's environment minister, long-time personal friend and lieutenant for Quebec.

Bouchard quit after a special parliamentary committee searching for a Meech Lake compromise issued its report.

North Korea calls for sharing single seat with South in U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — North Korea's ambassador said Friday that the two Korean states should begin early talks on joint membership in the United Nations and sharing a single seat with rotating responsibilities.

"Our new position by President Kim Il Sung is realistic and practical and based upon the changing world situation, which includes forthcoming German reunification and the union of the two Yemeni states," said Ambassador Pak Gil Yon, the permanent observer of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It was the second straight day in which the second of Pyongyng promoted the proposal for a single U.N. seat before reuni-

fication.

President Kim said in a speech

Thursday that the two Korean states should join the world body before reunification of the divided Korean peninsula, not

afterward — the previous position.

South Korea has not officially responded, but Asian diplomats said privately that the North Korean proposal was unrealistic and without precedent.

They said it was difficult to imagine how a Communist and non-Communist state with radically different systems could cooperate on foreign policy questions in the 159-nation world

body.

Both Korean states currently hold non-voting observer status in the 160-nation body.

"If the North and South are to join the U.N. before Korea's reunification is achieved," President Kim said, "they must not hold two separate seats, but enter it jointly as one member in favour of the reunification cause."

South Korea has opened a campaign for single, early membership of the Seoul government,

unless both Korean states enter separately and simultaneously. North Korea rejects those formulas, saying they would perpetuate the division of the peninsula.

"We believe that joint membership should be considered in the interests of the Korean nation as a whole, and to avoid the continuation of division," Ambassador Pak said in an interview with the Associated Press.

"Our proposal is possible, if South Korea has the sincere will to solve our national problem," he said, adding that support from the United States, South Korea's main ally, also was important.

Early joint membership with a single seat, he said, would hasten the process of reunification.

"We are most eager to discuss this in a Korean dialogue," Ambassador Pak said, "and we have no problem with a dialogue at all, at any time."

Colombians under siege on eve of presidential elections

BOGOTA (R) — Colombians were under siege from car bombs on the eve of Sunday's presidential elections which will pass a verdict on the government's bloody nine-month-old confrontation with cocaine cartels.

A car containing 30 kilograms of explosives blew up in a residential area of the capital, Bogota, on Friday night, injuring at least five people in the fourth urban bombing in three days.

The blast destroyed three houses, damaged dozens more and brought down power cables in the Las Villas suburb, witnesses said.

Three bombs have exploded in the cocaine capital Medellin, 250 kilometres northwest of Bogota, since Wednesday. Nine people

were killed when a car bomb blew up outside a luxury hotel in the city Thursday.

Local authorities imposed a 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. curfew in Medellin Friday night in a bid to stop the bombings.

The bombers managed to get through despite an intensive security operation known as the "Democracy Plan" which the government has implemented to ensure people can vote safely.

Police say the drug barons, in their war on the state, have stepped up the bombing campaign to intimidate voters.

Thousands of police and soldiers were patrolling big cities, stopping vehicles and searching them. Police arrested hundreds of suspects in raids in Bogota.

They said 30 people were killed in shootouts and guerrilla attacks Friday.

Western diplomats say the traffickers may be trying to scare voters into turning against front-running Liberal party candidate Cesar Gaviria, who has pledged to carry on with President Virgilio Barco's anti-drug offensive.

Some political commentators said fear of bombs could stop many people from voting Sunday.

Barco said Friday he was confident Colombians were not frightened. "The country will not let itself be scared," he told reporters.

Colombians will also vote Sunday in a referendum on whether to call a constituent assembly to reform the 1886 constitution.

He explained that in a tele-

Moscow delays curbs on food buying

MOSCOW (R) — City authorities in the Soviet capital postponed a ban on food sales to non-Muscovites Saturday to take the steam out of panic buying sparked by looming price hikes that has caused panic hoarding by Soviet citizens.

Russia, by far the largest of the Soviet Union's 15 republics, comprises more than two-thirds of the country's territory and is home to half the Soviet populace.

A victory for Yeltsin would give the former Moscow party chief a platform from which to challenge Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

"We are in a situation where we are being manipulated. Everything is being done to enable anyone to win except Yeltsin," said Bella Kurkova, one of the country's most popular television commentators.

Yeltsin earlier criticised the government programme for a transition to a market economy, presented Thursday by Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov. The government plan includes price hikes that has caused panic hoarding by Soviet citizens.

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The city council put off the ban until Monday and appealed to citizens to halt their hoarding spree.

The council had ordered a two-week food-buying ban on out-of-town residents from Saturday to curb mass purchases by shoppers trying to beat big price rises.

"We decided that it would not be right to do it today. Already buses from other towns are flooding in with people trying to buy goods. We will do it from Monday," council leader Yuri Luzhkov told a news conference.

Mass buying was sparked when

Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov appeared on television Thursday to outline government plans to revamp the economy, under which basic food prices would soar.

Moscow Mayor Gavril Popov said city stores had sold more vegetable oil and flour Friday than they normally sold in a month and he urged the crowds thronging Moscow shop to be calm.

"The situation in the city is getting critical. There is a real danger of things getting out of control. Hundreds of thousands of people are in the shops," he said.

Popov said Moscow authorities had been taken completely by surprise by the speech and that Ryzhkov should have made clear that the reform package — currently being discussed in parliament — had not yet become law.

Defence Ministry spokesman Carlos Lara called the charge "totally false."

The Government of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, which succeeded the Sandinista administration a month ago but left Sandinistas in charge of the military, promised to look into the report.

Commander Oscar Sobarro and other leaders of the rebels, known as contras, issued a communiqué initially charging that five disarmed contras were killed and nine others were missing after a May 18 army massacre near Waspala in Matagalpa province, 241 kilometres northeast of Managua.

Overall, the spending measure provides \$4.4 billion in domestic spending and foreign assistance. The administration's commitment to sending aid to Panama and Nicaragua led Bush to accept spending provisions for the pet domestic projects of some lawmakers.

The measure was flown to Bush's seaside Maine compound for his signature, and a White

House statement said Bush signed it Friday night.

Bush is vacationing at his

Maine retreat before next week's summit with Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

The White House had announced earlier that Bush had telephoned both Chamorro and Panamanian President Guillermo Endara.

The two Latin leaders "expressed their gratitude for the congressional action and thanked (Bush) for his efforts on behalf of their countries," Deputy White House Press Secretary Stephen Hart said in a statement.

"They stated that this is a major step forward in solidifying and supporting the growth of democracy in Panama and Nicaragua," Hart added.

President Guillermo Endara at a news conference Friday promised judicious use of the money for "the greatest benefit to all Panamanians." Nicaraguan presidential spokesman Danilo Lacayo said the money would "stabilise a little the situation we

live in."

Congress gave final approval to the \$42 million for Panama and \$300 million for Nicaragua as U.S. lawmakers rushed to adjourn for a weekend recess. Bush had asked for \$80 million in early March.

The lawmakers whittled the

figure down and padded the bill with \$4 in domestic aid for every dollar of Latin aid.

When finally sent to Bush on a

308-108 House vote, the measure had swelled to more than \$4 billion. It included programmes that ranged from filling in a collapsed utility tunnel on a North Carolina street to giving the Samoan Islands a \$750,000 ferry boat.

It also included other foreign

assistance: \$75 million to meet

refugee needs around the world,

\$45 million in anti-narcotics aid to

Bolivia and Peru, \$30 million for aid to Caribbean countries and \$30 million for Africa.

But overshadowing those amounts was several billion dollars in domestic programmes.

BISHOP ORDERED TO PAY CLERGYMAN DAMAGES IN LIBEL SUIT

BODOE, Norway (AP) — A Lutheran bishop was convicted of libel after he called a fellow

clergyman "disloyal" for writing

anti-immigration letters to

Norwegian newspapers.

The Bodoe City Court, in a 2-1 decision, ordered Bishop Frederik Groenningaeter to pay his sub-

ordinate, Pastor Olaf B. Dal, \$1,492 in compensation.

Groenningaeter said he had

merely said he regretted the

letter written by George Washington, and will be given to the

library's main reading room.

The trial was expected to last

several days.

Nicu's sister Zoe and his half-